

The Liggie

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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.

FORT LIGONIER DAYS

October 13 - 15, 2006

"Yesteryear's Memories" is the theme of this year's festival, and we believe that perfectly ties in with our mission.

As we go to press, Bill McCullough and

Staci Peipock are organizing our participation. First, there is a rumor

of a float with operating rail cars aboard. Second, Zimmerman's have again invited us to decorate their window.

We plan to commemorate the last run of the LVRR - a Yesteryear Memory for many of us. And last, we will have an informational and sales booth at the corner of St. Clair and Main Streets.

Call Staci at 724-238-2653 for your preferred time slot to staff the booth. Last year, we worked two or three-hour shifts. We will need two people minimum from 8 AM to 8 PM Friday and Saturday and from noon to 6 PM Sunday.

WELCOME ABOARD! New Friends of the LVRR

Tom Kenney
Idlewild and Soak Zone
William and Carole McCray
Kim and John Shaffer
Rodger McQuillis
Laurie Yennerell
Bob Lavelly
John Volpe

TOUR THE PW&S

Plan to dust off your CB radio, grease up your walking shoes and join us October 28th for a tour of the Pittsburg, Westmoreland and Somerset Railroad. John Vucina will again lead Friends of the Ligonier Valley Rail Road to the site of the Byers-Allen Saw Mill. This is also where the PW&S first crossed the Loyalhanna Creek. We will visit Mellon's Crossing, Mechanicsburg Crossing, Grove Run Siding, Bluestone, the water stop, Zufall, and Allenvale. We will use a caravan of cars connected with CB radios. Because the tour is for the Friends of the LVRR, if non-members would like to join us, we will be accepting applications until we leave the station. Plan to be at the Ligonier Station (currently the school administration building) on West Main Street, 9 AM, Saturday, October 28th.

It is still tough to imagine that these iron behemoths once climbed our Laurel Mountain. Even more exciting would have been to ride the train down the mountain! Call Bob at 724-537-2647 or e-mail him at lvrra@verizon.net to make your reservation.

DARLINGTON STATION UPDATE

Ligonier Township officials have approved both the sub-division of the property and our site plan. As necessitated by the Uniform Construction Code, we have contracted Joe Bleehash for his architectural expertise. JM builders will serve as general contractor for the project to restore the building to its 1930's glory.

The one last detail to hurdle is the actual transfer of the property. In that we will be utilizing a right of way through their property, we need to protect Kennywood/Idlewild interests.

As we go to press, our lawyers are finalizing the details of the Maintenance and Indemnification Agreement. The Darlington Station will belong to the LVRRA. The only question is when.

MODEL RAILROADING

It's hard to believe, but it's true. To date we have commissioned thirteen "O" gage model railroad cars and a steam engine. These models have been the backbone of our fundraising, and to boot, they are a lot of fun. Accolades are due to the manufacturers, our distribution centers and, most of all, to the model railroad fans who have supported us. Our most recent endeavor is a series of hopper cars commemorating local bygone industries.



Perhaps you have heard of the Booth and Flinn Quarry, the Marietta Mine or the Baton Coal Company. These concerns are printed on the sides of the hoppers. In addition to our office, the

hopper cars are also available in Ligonier at the Chamber of Commerce and Zimmerman's and at PostNet in the Latrobe 30 Shopping Plaza. Box cars, tank cars and cabooses are for sale at the office. The hoppers cost \$40 each, and the other models cost \$50 each. If the above options do not suit, please call 724-537-2647 to place a phone order.



Also for your model railroading enjoyment, we are offering an operating model of one of the LVRRA Doodlebugs. These models are being manufactured by MTH Electric Trains of Columbia, Maryland and will feature LVRRA station announcements. If you close your eyes and think back to the days when you rode the doodlebug, perhaps it will be Denny Piper's voice that you hear. The model approximates the 1152 gas-electric which was purchased in 1943 from the Boston and Maine. The price is \$350, and we only ordered 100 models. A down payment of \$200 will guarantee your order. Delivery is scheduled for October or November, 2006.

TESTING THE WATER

For years, the HO gage has been the standard for the model railroading hobby. However, many of us are from the instant gratification era of plug and play, i.e. "O" gage. Should we enter the HO market with commemorative issues of Ligonier Valley rolling stock? Tell us if you think there is interest. Call one of the officers with your druthers.

Ex-Ligonier Valley Rail Road Employee Visits Museum



Bob Stutzman and John Volpe

We have been authenticated! John Volpe, former LVRR employee, visited our mini-museum and even helped to identify himself in one of our photos. John, at age 92, is a walking-talking slice of LVRR history. After serving in the China-Burma-India campaign during World War II, John applied for a job at the LVRR. He was assigned to the engine house, but was also the designated pole climber to service the LVRR phone lines. John worked for the LVRR until they closed the doors in 1952. One of his last jobs was to remove the phone line from the telephone poles along the entire line.

After the LVRR, John went to work for Pohland Lumber Company in Latrobe and St. Clair Supply in Greensburg. Currently he resides with his wife in Greensburg. We are honored that John is an official Friend of the LVRR.

IN MEMORY...

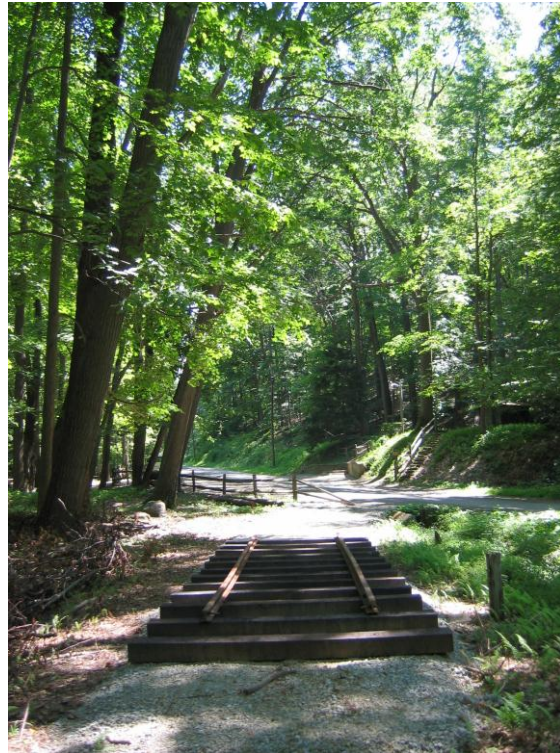
A Friend of the LVRR

Roger Alan Ross 1941-2006

Class of 59
Ligonier High School

REVIVAL OF THE PW&S!

John Vucina is laying track, literally, on the PW&S roadbed. In John's words, "Don't get me started on a project. I don't quit until I am satisfied." Known as Ranger One at Linn Run State Park, John Vucina, has been working at the park since he retired from Latrobe Steel, sixteen years ago. Over the years, John has retraced the roadbed of the PW&S through Linn Run State Park. Last November, John shared his knowledge with Friends of the LVRR as he led us on a tour of the PW&S.



John is working with Doug Finger, the park manager, to create an interpretive display commemorating the PW&S mountain railroad. During its sixteen-year life, it climbed Laurel Mountain to harvest the virgin expanse of timber and to offer passenger service between Ligonier and Somerset.

This life-size display will be a great addition to the appreciation of railroading history in the valley. John and the LVRRRA are soliciting photos and stories pertaining to this aspect of valley railroading. Please call one of the officers with any information. Phone numbers are listed elsewhere in this newsletter.

WILPEN, PENNSYLVANIA

By Pete Picadio

The positive feedback on this DVD has been tremendous. There is, however, one common "complaint." It is too short! We all wish there was more. Regardless, we are indebted to Pete for donating his movie to the LVRRA so that we may share his images of the valley's industrial heritage.

What are we talking about? As a young man, Pete bought an 8mm camera and a roll of color film. He had decided to record some of the mining and coking operations near his home town, Wilpen, PA. Approximately sixty years later, he narrated it for us and identified many of the workers in the film. The DVD directly connects with our efforts to research and eventually conduct a tour of the LVRRA's Mill Creek branch.

We will have an ongoing supply of DVD's available during Fort Days and the holidays. The price is \$15, and they are available at our St. Clair Street office Saturday mornings. They are also available through our website, www.lvrria.org.

FIRST ANNUAL DINNER

In spite of a torrential downpour, on June 22nd, 85 Friends enjoyed an evening of LVRRA-centered fellowship. Ligonier Country Inn proved to be a first-rate host for the event. Several recent acquisitions were on display, highlighted by the valuation chart of the Ligonier Wye donated by George Hoover. This chart, a mechanical drawing with noted revisions, depicts the history of the wye from 1900 thru to the end of the railroad.

The after-dinner program consisted of a slide show of old postcards of the historic LVRRA retracing its route from Latrobe to Ligonier. We are indebted to the Special Events Committee for their efforts.

RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS

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

George Hoover - His father's collection of LVRRA paper including a valuation chart of the Ligonier wye.

Paul Fry - Collection of railroad photographs and schedules.

Bob Johnston - Collection of LVRRA paper and railroad badges handed down from his father, a former employee of the LVRRA.

Bill Burns - Collection of PRR employee passes issued to his grandfather and great-grandfather.

Don Stevens - His father's railroad lanterns and a 1946 issue of *Trains* magazine.

Anonymous - Railroad spittoon, switch light, brass belt buckle, embossed-lantern globe and railroad tools.

Harry Albert - His brother's railroad scrapbook, photograph album and collection of video tapes.

Richard M. Scaife - LVRRA commemorative plate.

ARTIFACT RESTORATION

By contributing his time and talents, our Friend, Harry Bortz has restored seven of the railroad lanterns in our collection.

These lanterns now meet the criteria of "museum" quality and are on display at our office/mini-museum.

STEMWINDERS

Although the focus of the LVRRA is on the Ligonier Valley Rail Road, our interest also encompasses the Pittsburg, Westmoreland & Somerset Railroad and the logging railroads of the Ligonier Lumber Company and the Blair Lumber Company. The P. W. & S. was built as a logging railroad to serve the lumber mill of the Byers-Allen Lumber Company. The Blair Lumber Company operated a logging railroad that connected with the P. W. & S. near Laurel Summit. The Ligonier Lumber Company operated a mill at Oak Grove and operated a logging railroad to serve the mill that also connected with the L.V.R.R. The lumber industry is one of the three great industries of the Ligonier Valley that depended upon the railroads for their existence and success; the other two are the stone and coal/coke industries.

Given the important role that each of the four railroads played in the economic development of the Valley, not nearly enough research or writing about their history has been done. It is, therefore, an important matter when a written history becomes available.

In the early 1970s, three authors, Walter C. Casler, Benjamin F. G. Kline, Jr., and Thomas T. Tabor, III, collaborated on a series of books that documented the logging railroads of Pennsylvania. One of these books, "*Stemwinders*" *In The Laurel Highlands* By Benjamin F. G. Kline, Jr., is of particular interest to "Friends" of the LVRRA. "*Stemwinders*" covers the logging railroads of Southwestern Pennsylvania, including Somerset, Fayette, Westmoreland, Cambria, Bedford and Blair counties. Between its covers are over 110 glossy pages of company and railroad histories; photographs of mills,

towns, locomotives and people; maps, rosters and more.

This book consists of individual histories of various logging and lumber companies and associated logging railroads; however, in reading it, one will attain a good overview of the logging industry and an appreciation for its importance in the Laurel Highlands. In addition to several maps, there are about 140 well-produced photos showing employees, mills, the logging railroads and motive power. Of course, all three logging railroads of the Ligonier Valley are covered.

Of the three logging railroads of particular interest to "Friends" of the LVRRA, the P. W. & S. receives the most coverage, which is primarily based on *The Story of a Mountain Railroad* by Franklin J. Langsdale. For any who have not read the Langsdale book, the section in "*Stemwinders*" will serve as a good introduction to the P. W. & S. There are four photographs: the Byers-Allen mill, a passenger train at Rector and two pictures of P. W. & S. "*stemwinders*." The Blair Lumber Company and the Ligonier Lumber Company each receive about equal written coverage; two photographs accompany the Blair history. To the best of my knowledge, this represents the only published history of the Blair and Ligonier companies. Our web site also contains a few newspaper stories about these companies.

One of the stated purposes of the LVRRA is to "educate the public (and, ourselves) about the history of railroading in Ligonier Valley." To achieve that goal, we will make available, when possible, publications containing worthwhile information that should be of interest to our "Friends" and the public. Copies of "*Stemwinders*" *In the Laurel Highlands* are available at our office/mini-museum.

Contributed by Jim Aldridge

MINI-MUSEUM

Come and Visit!

Albeit small, it is your museum. Included in the collection are numerous industrial catalogues, circa 1925, that are stamped, "Property of the Ligonier Valley Rail Road." Obviously, these catalogues were part of the files of the person responsible for LVRR purchasing.

In today's world, the Rand McNally Company is a noted supplier of maps. During they twenties, Rand McNally also sold railroad passes. We have three of their catalogs offering print variations and cardstock choices. We are fortunate to be the guardians of these snippets of history. These sample passes are only one facet of the collection, which is growing every month.

Located at 106 N. St. Clair Street, Ligonier, your mini-museum/office/store is open every Saturday morning, 9 AM to noon.

FRIENDS OF THE LVRR Membership Renewals

The first wave of renewal letters to Friends of the LVRR is in the mail. Look for yours on the anniversary of your membership. If, for some reason, you do not receive yours, please call one of the officers. We look forward to your continued support. And remember, your membership helps to defray the expense of acquisition and restoration of LVRR artifacts and memorabilia

UPDATED PRICING POLICY

The Ligonier Valley Rail Road Association could not exist without the generous support of the Friends. This support has come in the form of memberships, financial gifts, donations of time, the sharing of knowledge and a high level of enthusiasm for the goals of the LVRR. The LVRRRA wishes to thank you for the support that has been given and express its gratitude.

We continue to search for ways to enhance the value of your membership in the Friends. Going forward, all Friends of the LVRR, regardless of membership level, will be eligible for a 10% discount on our store items with the exception of current models and the Doodlebug. Future models will be eligible for the discount.

LVRRRA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bill McCullough - President
724-238-5859

Jim Aldridge - Vice President
724-668-7405

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724-532-5564

Bob Stutzman - Treasurer
724-537-2647

Al Pilz - Director

Bill Stablein - Director

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COME ALONG WITH US AND RIDE THE LIGONIER VALLEY RAIL ROAD

Adams Memorial Library in Latrobe has invited us to return and present our virtual tour of the LVRR. They will be inviting the public to attend. So if you would like to catch a ride on the LVRR, join us in Latrobe at the library, 6 PM, November 2nd.