

CURRENTS

Winter 2004 NEWSLETTER

Published quarterly by Carroll Co. Wabash & Erie Canal Inc. for its members and friends.

A Canal Christmas Takes Us Back in Time

Mark you calendars now! On **Sunday, December 12** Canal Park in Delphi will be decked out in old-fashioned holiday spirit, ready to welcome you to a pioneer Hoosier Christmas experience. All buildings at the Park will be open from noon until 4:00 p.m., and the **Cabin Crafts Gift Shoppe** will also be open for your holiday shopping from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Saturday, December 11. The Canal Center will sparkle with dozens of lighted trees. The **Interpretive Center Museum** will be open its usual hours of 1:00-4:00 p.m. on Fridays and Sundays and 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturdays. On December 12 the museum will open at noon. There is no admission charge.

Come and enjoy Christmas music in the Canal Center. Watch artisans demonstrate crafts such as spinning and weaving, needlework and basket-making. Tour the restored 1844 Reed Case House where we invite you for Christmas punch and cookies. Be sure to stop at the Bowen Cabin for handmade items that are perfect for holiday gifts, and don't forget the Christmas cookie sale at the Kuns Cabin.

Something New this year will be fresh-baked apple dumplings at the Canal Center. You can eat them there with a dollop of ice cream while listening to Christmas music, or you can take home frozen dumplings to bake at home! All proceeds from sales support the Canal Association.

Also at the Canal Center there will be a **special recognition program at 2:00 p.m.** Among those to be honored are five local school children who were declared winners in the art project conducted by artist Rena Brouwer who spent a week-long residency at Delphi schools. A continuous video program about the project will show the students and their paintings of the Canal Park area.

The Bowen Cabin Crafts Gift Shoppe features unique handmade gifts such as cashmere items, potpourri for simmering, note cards, books, woodcrafts, hand-painted gourds, handmade paper items, candles, woven rugs and placemats, pottery, hand spun and knitted items, needle felted folk Santas and tree ornaments, American Folk toys, Whetstone Woodenware, and Bittersweet and Briers CDs of traditional music.

Attention Bakers: Cookies needed for Cookie Sale! Bring to Kuns Cabin or Canal Center

Sponsors Step Forward for Three More Murals

Three Canal-related murals will be added to the walls of the Canal Center lobby, thanks to generous sponsors. They will join the central mural featuring the Speece canal boat, painted from the only known photo of a Delphi-based canal boat. It was sponsored by Beta Psi chapter of Psi Iota Xi.

The next murals are being sponsored by Jim and Frances French, American Legion Post #75, and Cathy T. Smith. Jim is a former president and Cathy a former secretary of the Canal Association. The Legion members have requested that their mural be placed in memory of William Kerlin, a former member of the Post.

Research is proceeding on the subject matter for the three new murals. Three more sponsors are needed for murals to complete the series of seven that will depict canal scenes from Fort Wayne to Evansville. If you are interested, please contact Dan McCain at 765-564-6297.

"Boat Project" Sailing Right Along!

Although they are not exactly what we had in mind when we said we wanted to have a canal boat at Canal Park to give our visitors the experience of canal transportation in the 1850s, we DO have three boats now!

An appeal went out in October for a pontoon boat to help in clearing algae and duck weed from the canal's surface. The response was very gratifying and the result was acquisition of three donated boats! One of them will be reserved as a "work boat" for cleaning the canal. The other two have promise as passenger boats, especially if they can be refurbished to look something like a passenger "packet" that might have been used by canal travelers of the 1800s.

Work needs to be done on the boats, and quieter electric trolling motors will replace the old gasoline engines. Canal volunteers will do the work over the winter, and the boats could be available during festivals and special times for "outings" on the canal.

Ed Gruber was at the helm when the first boat was given its trial run on the canal in November. Volunteers report that not only did Ed make the ride quite exciting, the view from the water is very different and rewarding.

The ultimate plan remains: Acquiring funds – in the form of grants and donations – to build an authentic replica of a canal boat that will re-create for our visitors the experience of travel on the Wabash & Erie Canal. For that purpose a Canal Boat Fund has been set up and donations can be sent to Wabash & Erie Canal Treasurer, 12252 West State Road 18, Delphi, IN 46923. Be sure to mark your check "Canal Boat Fund."

Welcome to New Members Joining in 2004

Here's a hearty welcome to 75 new members or families who have joined Wabash & Erie Canal Inc. to date in 2004! We invite them to become involved as volunteers, to visit the Canal Park and Interpretive Center often, and bring their friends for tours, festivals and enjoyment of our trails.

From Delphi: Terry E. Goslee, Mike Brummett, Byron and Christie Disinger, Laura Disinger, Patricia Flairty-Wolf, Sarah Hoss, David and Susan Maxwell, Tri Kappa Associate Chapter, Wayne and Janis Zook, Delphi Youth Baseball, Edith Berlinger, Bob and Ann Brown, Nola Merson, Jack and Pat Cohee, Bobby Cree, Dave Murray family, American Legion Post #75.

From Lafayette, West Lafayette: Larry Batta, Dr. Richard A. Birchler, William Dalton, Kyle and Jennifer Jacobson, Michael and Cecily Schneider, Gladys Sharvelle, Larry G. Weise, Carol J. Widule, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Bergdahl, Diana Jones, Robert A. Miles, Joan Mohr Samuels, Joy Greenlee, Tom Peters, Wendy J. Swingston, Karen Toburen, Peter and Mary Sue Waser, Jim Whiteford, Bob Joly and Nancy Hewison, Alan and Ann McKenzie, Greater Lafayette Convention and Visitors Bureau, Michael and Pamela Luenz, Rex Trautman.

From Battle Ground: Chuck and Clara Molter, Museums at Prophetstown, Jean McGroarty, Nicholas Brenner. **From Monticello:** Lee and Carol Kreul, Dale and Pat Herrington, Rita J. Morgan. **From Wabash:** Jerry and Christine Lehman, Wabash County Historical Society, Joel and Beth Stein, Teresa Witkoske. **From Cutler:** Molverine Hufty, Cathy L. Kingery.

Others from Indiana: John and Laura Belle Romack, Sharpsville; Erin Bluemke, Kokomo; Jennie Jones Cox, Ambia; Farmers State Bank, Brookston; Helen M. Gooch, Paoli; Anita Hartman, Camden; Martha L. Willis, Portage; Fran McIntosh, Fort Wayne; L. Spencer Thornburg, Ridgeville; Victoria M. Green, Frankfort; Mary B. Lavagnino, Indianapolis; Don and Linda Martin, Huntington; Devon and Karen Nacke, Logansport; Steve and Sue Simerman, Ossian; Patti Taylor, Greencastle; William P. Hale, Chandler; James Sauerland, Brookville; L. Clayton Whitehead, West Point.

From Out of State: David Svegliato, LaPorte, TX; Greg and Dawn Bikowski, Athens, OH; Eleanor M. Hoch, Champaign, IL; Rod Baker, Titusville, FL.

Is Your 2004 Membership Paid?

In October we sent reminder letters to those who had not paid their 2004 membership. If you received this notice and have not yet responded, we would appreciate hearing from you. You can pay 2005 dues at the same time and save a stamp and a check when January rolls around!

Canal Landmark Will Be Preserved

Burnett's Creek Arch, an important Wabash & Erie Canal landmark, has received funding that will assure its preservation for years to come. This fall Carroll County received a \$500,000 grant that will fund the restoration. Although the Canal Association has no direct responsibility for this historic stone bridge, we recognize it as an important artifact in local canal history and are thrilled that it will receive much needed work.

The bridge was built in 1838 to carry the Wabash & Erie Canal over Burnett's Creek. When the canal was abandoned, this section of it was paved over and became "Towpath Road." The structure is the oldest in-service bridge in Indiana and is on the National Register of Historic Places, due to the efforts of the Carroll County Historical Society. It is also one of the oldest and largest surviving culverts along the 468-mile Wabash & Erie Canal.

Built without mortar, the arch has stood for many years, but it has been settling. The restoration project will address that, and will also minimize the water flow to lessen stress on the structure. The project also includes a parking area and pedestrian area to enable tourists to view the arch. Public access has not been available in the past.

The grant is one of the highly competitive Federal Transportation Enhancement grants for use in non-traditional transportation projects and covers 80 percent of the project. The County will provide the remaining 20 percent. Donations collected a few years ago will provide landscaping.

Education Expansion Program Receives Grant

The canal-related educational project for fourth grade pupils and their teachers which we told about in our Fall Newsletter, has received the blessing of the Carroll County Community Foundation in the form of a \$1,500 grant.

The program will provide hands-on games based on canal-era life, emphasizing learning in language arts, social studies, history and math. Michael and Cecily Schneider were instrumental in outlining the program, and have been working with others in the community and the Canal Board to develop specific programs geared to the fourth-grade level. Teaching aids also will be an important part of the program, providing instructional material that can be used in the classroom before a class visits the Canal Interpretive Center.

Progress Made on Monon Railbed Trail

Completion of brush-clearing work this fall has enhanced the development of a walking and biking trail on the abandoned Monon track right-of-way to the High Bridge over Deer Creek. The eventual result will be additional two miles added to the eight miles of the Delphi Historic Trail system, much of which is along the Wabash & Erie Canal towpath.

Right-of-way was recently donated to the Canal Association by the Richard Mears and Sherry Mears families. This allowed the trail development to go east from the present end of existing public access. Further work will include finely crushed limestone screenings on top of the coarse railbed stone. The trail will provide easy walking and biking for the two miles from Delphi City Park to the end of the property owned by the Canal Association. At that point there is a parking lot near the brick 1850s house of Sherry and Lois Mears. This house is within the Deer Creek Valley Rural Historic District. The District is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Canal Society of Indiana Announces Spring Tour

The spring tour of the Canal Society of Indiana April 8-10, 2005 will center on sites along the revitalized Central Canal in downtown Indianapolis. The canal has been beautifully restored and landscaped, and the towpath has become a greenway trail. Also included will be a special tour of the Indiana State Museum and other museum sites. Tour headquarters will be in Zionsville. If you would like to join CSI for this event, please contact Carolyn Schmidt at 260-432-0279 to make reservations.

Make checks to Wabash & Erie Canal Inc.
Send to return address at right

Wabash & Erie Canal Inc.
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Enclosed is \$ _____ membership

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All donors receive our quarterly newsletter

\$ 5 Student Membership

\$ 10 Basic Adult & Family

\$ 25 Leadership Level

\$ 50 Contributing Level

\$ 100 Sponsoring Level

\$ 150 Corporate Level

\$1,000 LIFE Membership (4-5 installments)

What's Been Happening at the Canal Center

- A callout and training session for volunteers was held on October 11 at the Canal Center. Anyone wishing to volunteer can call 765-564-2870 or talk with any Board member.
- Wanda Willis, author of *Hoosier Haunted Trails* and *More Hoosier Haunted Trails* (both available at the gift shop) presented a program on another of her interests, Christmas ornaments, on November 8. She showed some of her extensive collection.
- The "second annual" Ladies Tea Party took place at the Canal Center October 10. Judy Berkshire spoke about tea, its many flavors and proper brewing methods. There was an award for the best hat, and an unexpected "guest" from South Carolina gave the ladies a lot to think about!
- The Canal Association hosted a community Halloween again this year, setting earlier hours for the young "spooks" who came for games, prizes and hot dogs.
- School children's water color paintings of canal scenes were on display November 4, a culmination of the artist-in-residence project in Delphi Community Schools.

Planning a wedding, a reception, family get-together, class reunion, business meeting? If it requires an attractive, well-equipped space for up to 275 people at tables and a catering kitchen, consider the Wabash & Erie Canal Conference Center. To rent space, please call Judy Stirm at 765-564-6378 or 564-2870. Hurry – the schedule fills up fast!

~~~ Visit us on the Web: [www.wabashanderiecanal.org](http://www.wabashanderiecanal.org) ~~~