

CURRENTS



Spring 2005 NEWSLETTER

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

Lewis & Clark Interpreters at Annual Meeting

The Wabash & Erie Canal Association will continue its celebration of the Lewis and Clark bicentennial year at its Annual Meeting Tuesday, April 19 at the Canal Conference and Interpretive Center. Their presentation will follow a dessert bar at 6:30 p.m. and a brief business meeting. **The public is cordially invited to attend.**

At last year's Annual Meeting, a large crowd enjoyed Esther Duncan's portrayal of the wife of Pvt. William Bratton, a member of the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery. This year, Roger Strater and David Hovde will tell their story of participating in the Discovery Expedition of St. Charles, a re-enactment of Lewis and Clark's 1803-06 exploratory journey across the continent to the Pacific coast and back.

Appropriately costumed, Roger Strater will portray William Bratton, an Indiana private on the 1800s expedition, and David Hovde will interpret the character of Pvt. Alexander Hamilton Willard. Their experiences along the route taken 200 years ago by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark will provide a fascinating evening.

Roger has a master's degree in American History and is a doctoral student at Purdue. David has an advanced degree in library science and anthropology and has taught courses at Purdue on Natives of the American West. Both are associated with the Purdue University Libraries.

Murals Adding Colorful History to Canal Center

Four of the proposed nine murals depicting Wabash & Erie Canal sites will be hanging in the Canal Center lobby by the time of the Annual Meeting April 19. They are adding colorful canal history to the beautiful lobby sponsored by the Canal Society of Indiana. Please come by to see them.

We previously announced mural sponsorships by Beta Psi chapter of Psi Iota Xi, Jim and Frances French, American Legion Post #75, and Cathy T. Smith. Thanks to Mary Johnson, a fifth mural sponsorship has been received in memory of Elmer Johnson, Mary's late husband and a former Canal Association board member

The central mural depicts the Speece Company's canal boat, painted from the only known picture of a Delphi canal boat. Other murals now hanging feature the Sample and Sons warehouse in Lafayette, Burnett's Creek Arch and a pivot bridge in Logansport. When completed, the series of murals will depict sites along the Canal from Evansville to Toledo.

If you would like to sponsor one of the remaining murals, please contact Dan McCain at 765-564-6297 or any board member.

We've Had Lots of Visitors!

Gordon Stevens, a newly appointed Canal Association Director, has been tracking our sign-in records at the Canal Interpretive Center. He reports that from the Center's opening day July 3, 2003 through December 4, 2004 we had 7,438 visitors sign in. They represented 43 states (from Alaska to Wisconsin) and 18 countries (from Australia to Sweden). Twenty-four groups of children or adults came for guided tours of the Interpretive Center.

Grant Awarded for Planning Our Canal Boat

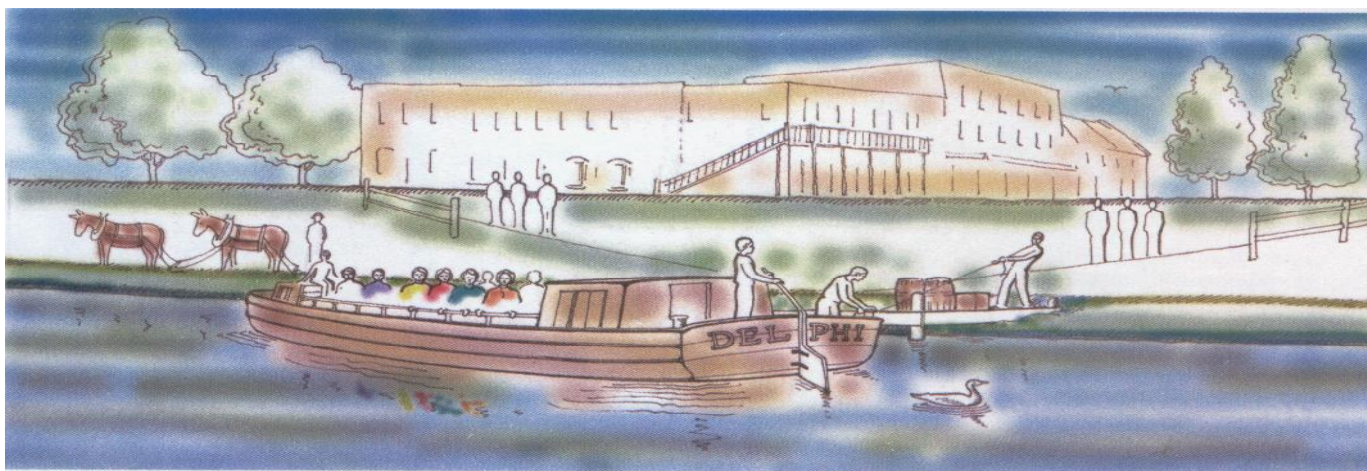
The Canal Association has been successful once again in applying for a grant – this time to help pay for the planning and engineering of a replica canal boat and supporting facilities on the only navigable section of Indiana’s Wabash & Erie Canal.

The award of \$57,375 from the Indiana Rural Development Council is expected in April. The grant will also fund a marketing study and plans for outdoor interpretive signs and exhibits. Canal board members are finding it very exciting to work with Len Mysliwiec and Lise Schools, who have already demonstrated their “magic” with planning the Interpretive Center museum exhibits. The grant will allow us to produce professional-quality work on this new outdoor undertaking as we did on the museum on the interior of the Canal Center.

In addition to a canal boat that will carry passengers on the Canal, a dock and a warehouse that will double as canal boat storage are on the “drawing board.” Plans also call for interactive exhibits and graphics along the trails to enhance the entire canal-era experience. “We are fortunate to have such a rich zone with history to extract for the benefit of the public and especially children,” President Dan McCain says.

The Canal Association, in cooperation with the City of Delphi, has re-applied for a large grant for the actual construction of the boat, docks and warehouse. The funds would come from a federal program administered by the Indiana Department of Transportation. Meantime, four donated pontoon boats are being repaired and refurbished. One will be used for a work boat; the other two will carry passengers on special occasions to give the public an enticing taste of canal boat travel. A fourth one, recently acquired, will be used for parts.

***Our thanks to
pontoon boat donors
Dale Brown, Bob and
Tom Dyer, Earl
Fellinger and Ron
Bogan!***



Enthusiastic Volunteers Come to Call-Out

It was more than the aroma of hearty ham and bean soup and slabs of warm corn bread that brought more than 30 potential (and present) volunteers to a Volunteer Call-Out February 24 at the Canal Center. Pat Draper was in charge of the free supper, which also included generous scoops of ice cream.

President Dan McCain asked the volunteers to break into groups according to their specific interests. Designated board members were stationed at tables to discuss volunteer possibilities of working on the trails, serving as group guides, cleaning and maintenance, computer data work,

building exhibits and other construction projects, etc. Everyone went home with assignments or ideas about how they could help, including several current volunteers who were interested in branching out into other tasks. The evening was pronounced a success.

Interested in volunteering? Call 765-564-2870 or 564-6297. Or pick up a list of “areas of interest” at the Canal Center. The Volunteer Notebook, which is full of useful details for volunteers, has recently been updated and is ready to guide new volunteers.

No Excuse for Staying Indoors!

A series of healthful, informative walks is announced for the spring months by the Canal Association. So mark your calendars, put down the TV remote and get moving!

Added to familiar walks along the towpaths and other historic venues are several three-hour fitness walks conducted by Lois Johnston. Her walks are arranged so that hikers can go the full distance or opt to drop off at a couple of points to shorten the time.

Here is the run-down through July 4 (more are planned through December):

- April 6 Wandering Wednesdays Nature/History Hike to High Bridge 1-3 p.m. from City Park
- April 9 Long Hike for Fitness and Enjoyment with Lois Johnston – meet at Canal Park 1p.m.
- April 23 EARTH DAY at Canal Park with Boy Scout camping in Canal Park and Park Annex
- April 23 Odd Fellows Cemetery Walk, 2 p.m., ½ mile N. of Delphi on Carrollton Rd., Mark Smith
- April 28 Spring Nature Walk along Rock Creek, with owner Terry Lacy narrating, 6:30 p.m.
- April 30 Riley Park to High Bridge on Deer Creek, 10 a.m., Patrick Hale narrating wildflowers
- May 14 A Walking Meditation along Wabash River from Trailhead Park, 10 a.m., David McCain
- May 18 Towpaths, Dams, Locks and the Irish, 1-3 p.m. from Trailhead Park with Dan McCain
- May 21 May Day Celebration in Canal Park; workday a.m., lunch; playtime, walk at 1 p.m.
- June 4 National Trails Day – Volunteer recognition, lunch, walk opportunities, Canal Park, 11:30
- June 4 Long Hike for Fitness and Enjoyment, with Lois Johnston – meet at Canal Park 1 p.m.
- TBA Paper Mill Tour with papermaking demonstration from Canal Park 1 p.m., Mark Smith
- July 2 Long Hike for Fitness and Enjoyment, with Lois Johnston – meet at Canal Park 1 p.m.
- July 4 Narrated Canal Walks around Canal Center, discovering the facades, with Brian Stirm
(Walks will be posted on the Canal Hotline 765-564-6572 – Check for the latest news)

Canal Association Honors Charles Gerard

Delphi historian Charles Gerard was honored on his birthday March 3 when friends gathered at St. Elizabeth Health Care Center in Delphi to share the day with him. On behalf of the Canal Association, Ed Gruber presented a plaque thanking Charles for the wealth of historic information he has provided as we developed the Interpretive Center. He was especially resourceful in researching the various historic buildings that are depicted on the outside façade of the Center.

Charles is also recognized in the naming of the newest trail, the “Monon High Bridge Trail.” Wording on the sign at the entryway to this new trail will include “Honoring Historian Charles Gerard and Neighboring Landowners.”

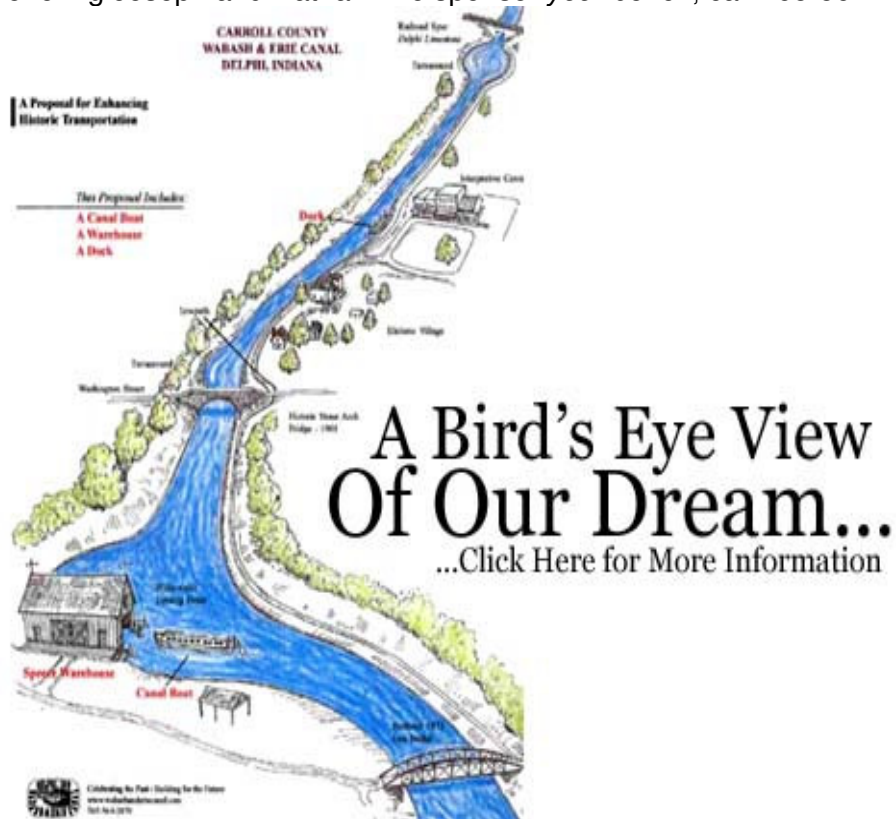
Canal History Related in New Books

The newest book by canal historian Tom Castaldi, of Ft. Wayne, is now available at the Canal Center. *Wabash & Erie Notebook III* describes the canal’s construction and points out the relics that are visible to this day through Wabash and Miami counties. Numerous historical photographs, maps, reports and diary entries are included. Tom’s *Notebook I* is about Allen and Huntington counties and *Notebook II* deals with the canal through Cass, Carroll and Tippecanoe counties. These two books also are available at the Canal Center.

The Wabash & Erie Canal Association also has two attractive books for sale. One describes the 1850s Delphi downtown buildings that were replicated to provide the front and side facades of the Canal Center. The companion book takes the reader on a tour of the Canal Interpretive Center museum galleries. They sell for \$8 each or the set for \$12.

New Supply of Trail Benches Await Sponsorship

A new supply of trail benches is being produced by the school shop class. With sponsorship of a bench for \$150, your name or other designation will be placed on the bench. These are sturdy, permanent benches. Recent sponsors are Terry Goslee, in memory of his father Don, and Paul Brandenburg, honoring Joseph and Nathan. To sponsor *your* bench, call 765-564-2870 or 564-6297



What's Happening at the Canal

- Our traditional Canal Earth Day, Project W.E.E.D. will be at 9 a.m. April 16, a call-out work day for individuals, families and groups, with lunch for workers at Trailhead Park.
- We are in need of a used desktop or laptop computer in good condition, to be used mainly for e-mail messaging concerning reservations at the Canal Center.
- The Indiana Plein Aire artists will be painting at the Canal Park and nearby on May 21. Come out to see these out-door painters at work.
- Also on May 21 is our May Day celebration, lunch, walks, and flower planting by volunteers. We will also host a statewide Grassroots Preservation Workshop that day at the Canal Center.
- New trails brochures are ready, updating the trails map and adding the High Bridge trail.
- Three attractive pole lights are being installed along the parking area near the cabins, in cooperation with the City of Delphi. We also will soon install a new lighted entry sign.
- The annual First Steps Spring Egg Hunt was held at Canal Park March 19.
- Thanks to Kurtis Fouts for the legal assistance he's given to the Canal Association. He takes up the work previously done so diligently by the late attorney George Obear.
- Reserve Sunday June 19 for Father's Day activities at Canal Park and on the trails! Details later.
- **Need to rent the Canal Center? Contact Judy Stirm at 765-564-6378 or 564-2870.**

Yes, we are open. . . . The Canal Conference and Interpretive Center is open from 10 to 4 each Saturday and 1 to 4 each Sunday year around. Beginning June 7 we are adding summer hours Tuesdays from 1 to 4. To schedule group tours call 765-564-2870 or 564-6297. We are located at 1030 North Washington Street, Delphi, IN. Please note: Also open **Memorial Day**.

**Visit our Canal Center Gift Shop for books, shirts, note cards, toys and more!
Check out our recently updated website ~ www.wabashanderiecanal.org**