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NEWS FROM THE WABASH & ERIE CANAL • DELPHI, INDIANA September 2022



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Volunteer Spotlight: Bill Lapcheska

Each month, we want to

Major Renovation Underway



Our main building, the Interpretive Center, is getting a major upgrade this fall. Completed in 2003, the building was designed to imitate the appearance of downtown Delphi based on some historic images from the 19th century. Some of the building has a brick exterior, which is still looking fantastic. However, the majority of the building is cement board, which has not stood the test of time, unfortunately. This summer, the Board of Directors moved decisively to protect the building from any damage beyond the cosmetic level.

highlight one of our many volunteers in recognition of their service and to share ways that you can get involved in our mission of preservation, education, and recreation.

This month, we'll hear from Bill Lapcheska.



What is your volunteer role at the Canal? I do as little as possible! No, actually I am the treasurer and serve on the Board of Directors. The most fun thing I do is run the canal boat. Plus I do whatever they need me to do!

How many years have you been volunteering, and how did you get involved? I retired a little over seven years ago, so it has probably been six or seven years. Steve Gray and John Polles invited me to come up and try driving the boat, and I was hooked.



What is your favorite part of volunteering at the Canal? I



The main problem areas can be seen especially around trim and the areas most exposed to moisture. Due to the nature of the materials, attempting to patch over the damaged areas would leave us constantly dealing with future issues on other spots. We will be replacing the cement board with Everlast composite siding, which is guaranteed to last 50 years minimum and is among the most durable products available today. We're excited for the new life this will breathe into the building, which has served as our hub for so many years!



The best, most important part of this whole project is retaining the original aesthetic and character of the Interpretive Center. All the signage and colors will be retained, even the variety of siding widths! While this is a large undertaking, we are glad it will allow us to continue offering a beautiful space for the community.

would say my favorite part is having school kids riding on the canal boat. Back before COVID, we would have kids blow the horn for departure, but now we get volunteers to help us untie the boat from the dock.

Do you have a favorite fun fact about the Canal Era?

I think it's interesting that canals were George Washington's dream for opening up the frontier. Also, I grew up in the beautiful city of Logansport, Indiana, about three blocks from where the canal passed through.

Anything else you'd like to share about your volunteer experience?

I've enjoyed all the people I get to work with, and I have thoroughly enjoyed working alongside all the board members.

For more information about volunteering with us, click the link below.

[VOLUNTEER TODAY!](#)

Upcoming Events



While the summer season may have ended on September 3, there is still plenty to do here at the canal! Below are some events that are on the horizon:



The crew has already completed almost half of the back wall, and we're looking forward to seeing the renovation continue to unfold! The project is scheduled to be completed later this fall.

Historic Classes in Full Swing



We are in the final weekend of our first-ever historic trades classes, and they have been a great success. In this session, we have hosted classes in basket-making, broom-making, coopering, hearth cooking, needle felting, and weaving.

Oct. 18: Wabash & Erie Canal Annual Meeting, 7PM. *Come celebrate the year's accomplishments as we recognize all the wonderful people who made this year a success. Above is a photo from the 2021 meeting.*

Oct. 22: Village Landscape & Trails Cleanup Day, 9AM-Noon. *Get your hands dirty, but enjoy a FREE lunch afterwards! All are welcome to join this fun day of working together in the park.*

Nov. 5: Hike the Trails Day, 1-4PM. *Bring your walking shoes and get outside--cover all the ground that you can!*



Summer Send-off



With the arrival of September came the end of our regular season, and what a wonderful season it was. Unlike past years, we focused our efforts on Saturday afternoons, and it was a real payoff for



There has been a great balance of manageable class sizes while still bringing new people to experience all the learning and history that Canal Park offers. All classes have been held in the Pioneer Village so students can get a fully immersive experience.



Students have come from all around our region of the state to join the various offerings. We've even had one student from Texas, so we are covering a lot ground for our first foray! Above you can see Karen Bradshaw teaching the needle felting class, and below we see some weaving students working at their looms.

visitors and volunteers alike.



Since volunteers could all gather on the same day, there were always plenty of destinations for visitors to experience. We had busy boat rides and lots of foot traffic through the museum, Reed Case House, and Pioneer Village.



It was delightful to welcome new volunteers in different areas of the park, including at the carpenter's shop, the summer kitchen, the little white church, and on the boat crew! Our volunteers make the difference as we strive to bring Indiana history to life for our guests, which came from all around the state, nation, and even the world!

Did you know...?



If you were not able to join the fun this time around, no worries! We will be hosting another round of historic trades classes next year as early as spring. We will post information on our website, social media, and in the newsletter when the new schedule is confirmed. In the meantime, if you have a class you'd like to see offered, or if you have any questions related to classes, you can email: classes@canalcenter.org.

Carrollton Cleanup



If you haven't visited the Carrollton Bridge site just north of Delphi, we strongly encourage you to do so! You can find it by traveling north on Towpath Road from town, and it is quite a historic gem. During the Canal Era, there was a dam near Pittsburg that created a massive slackwater all the way upriver to the Carrollton Bridge and



You can hold your wedding, corporate meeting, or birthday celebration at the Canal Center?



We offer a variety of options for each different type of event. We offer free wifi and can accommodate up to 300 guests!

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beyond. This was the only site along the entire canal that crossed the Wabash River. Canal boats would be lowered via a lock into the river (which was more like a lake due to the dam), and mules would pull the boats across the Carrollton Bridge, which was wood construction at the time. Then, the towpath simply followed the slackwater until just north of Delphi where they would re-enter a separate canal channel.



These two acres were generously given to Carroll County Wabash & Erie Canal years ago by the Grantham family, and it was marvelously well-kept by Byron Ryder for years. We appreciate all the work Byron has put into this site, and this year we were pleased to welcome a new volunteer crew. During the summer, Terry Wilson, Ken Rector, and Greg Hummer came to our office out of the blue and asked if they could help. This group of gentlemen have experience, equipment, and a desire to keep our community vibrant.



It's important to know that our organization is exceptional because of volunteers who are willing to use their hobbies, skills, and resources to create an environment where the public can learn and have fun! History does not preserve itself--it takes a concerted, selfless effort

to come together and collect these stories to hand down to future generations. Sometimes it requires donations of historic artifacts, and sometimes it requires landscaping and maintenance! We are so grateful for all those who join us in this mission.

Coming Soon: Canal Activity Book!

Over the summer, we were pleasantly surprised to hear from Leland Gamson, an accomplished children's book author. Mr. Gamson has been a longtime canal enthusiast and he is particularly fond of our site here at the Wabash & Erie Canal. He has offered his services, plus those of his collaborating illustrator, Karen Camden Welsh, to create a children's activity book entirely focused on Wabash & Erie Canal Park. And most wonderfully, he has offered to complete this project free of charge!

The book is currently in development, and the creative team has made a couple visits already to gather research and collect photographs and ideas for activities that will engage learners both young and old within the activity book's pages.

Once completed, the book will be available for sale at the Interpretive Center gift shop. We look forward to having it available to enlighten and entertain young minds as they engage in our immersive history experience.

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