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Currents



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



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**Museum Hours
and Closure**

A heads up for all potential museum visitors: we will have some days during the

A Merry Canal Christmas



In early December we hosted our grandest event of the winter: Christmas at the Canal! It was a wonderful time that offered delightful options for all ages to enjoy. There were a few changes this year, and they seemed to encourage visitors to check out all the historic fun around Canal Park. Above you can see Santa who traveled all the way from the North Pole to greet boys and girls in the comfort of the Kuns Cabin.

holidays and this winter when we will be closed! Read below for more information.



Holiday and Winter Hours:

CLOSED Friday, 12/23 through Monday, 12/26. Will re-open on Tuesday, 12/27!

CLOSED Friday 12/30 through Monday, 1/2.

CLOSED for repairs, deep cleaning, and updates January-February. Will re-open on March 1!

Why is the museum closing in January and February? As in past years, this time is vital for our volunteer Monday-Wednesday-Friday Crew to make needed updates and repairs in the museum, plus it allows our custodial staff a chance to refresh everything before the busy spring season starts with school and group tours.

Last year, the MWF Crew waterproofed the water model table, enhanced the "floating" airbag system underneath the replica canal boat cabin, and much more. This year we hope to tackle some other tasks that will keep us a top destination for hands-on Indiana history education.



We rolled out the hospitality elsewhere at the park, inviting the public to visit the Reed Case House and the interactive Canal Era museum free of charge. Above you can see the spread that Mark Smith (or "Reed Case") set out for guests to sample. Of course, all these educational and fun options are only possible because of the volunteers who lovingly tend to their buildings and crafts. When visitors walked in the Canal Center, they were often taken aback by all the things to do!



Another big draw was the Interpretive Center itself, because the building was full of vendors selling handmade gifts of all kinds. Francie French and Marlene Lawson managed the Christmas Cookie table, with proceeds benefiting the Canal. And below you can see the reception hall packed with shoppers as well.



If you are interested in education, history, or working with children, we are always on the lookout for museum guides. If you are interested in fixing and building things, we always welcome new members of the MWF Crew as well! Whether you work as a guide in the museum or on the repair crew, the Canal will get you set up with everything you need.

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

VOLUNTEER
TODAY!

Upcoming Event:
Day After
Christmas Hike



While there may be some cold weather and a white Christmas incoming, it is always good to keep the blood flowing with exercise. And it's even better to keep the brain active with educational experiences!



Lunch was provided by ALLBQ's from Flora, and it appeared that visitors were able to check off plenty of items from their wish lists. With a bustling day in the park, we are proud to offer events like Christmas at the Canal as a gift to the community. These events would not be possible without the steadfast support of our volunteers and the generous giving of our donors! Thank you for helping make this joy and learning a reality!

Music and Stories for Christmas



One of the most exciting new developments from this year's Christmas at the Canal festival was the opportunity to make some new friends! In the Little White Chapel we were treated with wonderful music, and in the Interpretive Center lobby children enjoyed some hand-picked Christmas stories.

Here's some extra-great news: you can do both of these things at once at the Day After Christmas Hike here at the Canal Center! As you may have guessed, this event will take place on December 26, and we will gather at the Interpretive Center at 1:00 PM.

One of our longtime boat crew members, Carl Seese, will narrate the hike, and this informal setting is perfect for asking questions and learning all things canal-related!



The hike itself will be suitable for all walkers, and guests are welcome to join for parts or stay for the entire duration! There will be coffee and hot chocolate available at the Interpretive Center following the hike.

Note: If weather prevents us from hosting the hike, that information will be posted on our Facebook page as soon as we make the decision to cancel. Otherwise, we look forward to seeing you at 1:00 PM at the Interpretive Center on December 26!

Repair Rescue



Ivy Coleman from the Delphi Public Library kindly offered to read stories for children throughout the day, and she was even careful to select stories that were period-appropriate for the 1800's! We are grateful for all the work the library does to engage the community and provide timely and useful programming. Delphi might be a small town, but we offer big-time community services!



In the Little White Chapel, the St. Matthew's Singers graciously shared their music and voices for a pair of interactive performances that were full of true Christmas spirit. The chapel, formerly a German Lutheran church, was packed for both performances, and listeners were treated to flowing harmonies and timeless classics. Throughout each performance, the audience was invited to sing along for certain carols. As the sound of voices filled the building, one could easily see why the human voice was the primary instrument for many church congregations in rural settings during the Canal Era!

We are endlessly thankful for all those who partnered with us to make Christmas at the Canal a special event, and we look forward to seeing our new friends again next year!



Sometimes people will ask how we can operate such an extensive park while keeping costs low. A secret ingredient that keeps things running efficiently is having neighbors and community partners who are ready to help in a time of need!

Recently our flag pole pulley broke, and we had no way of reaching the top to make the fix. All it took was reaching out to Dick Bradshaw, who stopped by with a bucket truck to repair and improve the flagpole so it lasts well into the future!



Dick and his grandson Derek used their workshop at Delphi Body Works to make the repairs, and Bill Bradshaw generously shares his bucket truck for community projects.

As Dick said, "This is our canal, and we have to take care of it!" We are quite thankful to have the colors flying once again!

Become a Canal Supporter Today!



It is the time of year when we typically send out our calls for membership, and we hope you have enjoyed these updates from Canal Park as we pursue our mission of preservation, education, and recreation. Going into 2023, we are reimagining and improving how we gather community support.

Rather than paying annual membership dues, all donations \$25 and above will make you a supporter of Carroll County Wabash & Erie Canal, Inc.! Here at the conclusion of a year when we have welcomed over 1,000 students, chartered over 50 boat tours (in addition to the public rides), and hosted many hundreds of guests from around the nation on our campground, we invite you to partner with us at whatever level is appropriate for you. We are able to keep financial barriers low for all to enjoy Indiana and Carroll County history in large part thanks to generous donations from the community.

Also for the first time, we will be offering special perks for supporters who give at certain levels. See the table below for more information on our individual/family benefits!

Indeed, fifty years ago, this piece of Indiana history was in danger of disappearing, but committed residents restored this section of the Wabash & Erie Canal so the public can enjoy and learn stories that shaped our region and state. Canal Park exists because of community support, and we are proud to share the canal with all who visit!

Time to Party!



With the official closing of the canal boat's 2022 season and *The Delphi* going on her lift, the boat crew held its annual party last month. Dale and Mitzi De Young hosted, and it was a wonderful time of remembering a busy, successful season while enjoying one another's company.



Perhaps most importantly, Admiral John Polles received his official headgear suitable for someone of his rank.



INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY PERKS

| |
|--|
| HOGGEE: Donations \$25-149. *Recognition letter as a supporter of the Wabash & Erie Canal |
| FIRST MATE: Donations \$150-299. *Hoggee Perks *Free museum entry for the donor and any three guests per visit in 2023 |
| LOCKMASTER: Donations \$300-\$467 *First Mate Perks *Free Case House entry for the donor and any three guests per visit in 2023 *Free exclusive T-shirt (available for pickup at Canal Center in spring 2023) *1 night free stay in the Lockmaster's Airbnb cabin, pending availability |
| 468 MILE CLUB: Donations \$468+ *Lockmaster Perks *Free exclusive hat (available for pickup at Canal Center in spring 2023) *Four free boat tickets *VIP All-Access Tour of Canal Park with executive director Mike Tetrault |

We are also offering corporate partnerships, and if that might be a possibility for your business, please get in touch! You can email director@canalcenter.org to get started for your business entity.



Our team sent out many of the letters this week, and even the process of working on the mailing was a reminder of how powerful and encouraging it is when communities come together to bring about meaningful change. We invite you to consider how you might be able to assist us with bringing Indiana history to life for our treasured guests.

If you'd like to sign up immediately with us, [you can visit our online giving portal here](#). At this webpage, you can input how much you would like to donate, and you can even set up monthly donations to spread your giving across the year! We have a goal of enrolling 50 members in our exclusive 468 Mile Club, and we would love to see you in it! Our website will also have the updated information shortly, where you will be able to mail in your 2023 Supporter Form.

While we take our history seriously, we make sure to have a great time as we serve. If you might be interested in joining the volunteer boat crew or participating in another capacity with us, there are all sorts of opportunities to volunteer for people of diverse interests and backgrounds. If you'd like more information, click the "Volunteer Today!" link above or email: director@canalcenter.org.

Did you know...?



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!

[Save your date today!](#)



We are excited to partner with you for the next calendar year!

Carrollton Bridge: Did You Know?



The above painting, by Terry Lacy, hangs in the Interpretive Center lobby, part of the mural depicting various locations and aspects of the Wabash & Erie Canal. In a recent edition of the *Online Currents*, we made reference to the Carrollton Bridge site, but we thought you might want to know some of the fascinating history behind this local marvel!

The most important fact is that the Carrollton Bridge was the only site where the Wabash & Erie Canal crossed over the Wabash River! At Fort Wayne, where construction began, the canal is on the north side of the Wabash, and if you follow the river's southwestern course, you will notice that eventually you would end up in Illinois if you never crossed the river! Therefore, it was in Indiana's interest to cross the Wabash at some point in order to make sure the canal would benefit Indiana's interior.

To make the crossing possible, a dam was built at Pittsburg, 4.5 miles downriver from the bridge. This created a large slackwater, almost like a lake, which minimized the river's current. Otherwise, it would be impossible for a mule to pull a boat across the river without being swept away!

Canal boats coming from Fort Wayne would be lowered from canal level down to the river's level via a lock, and the mule team would simply walk up to the bridge and across the river via a special walkway on the bridge (*see above illustration*). The canal boat would be pulled across the Wabash and then down the river another few miles until re-entering a canal channel before reaching the Pittsburg Dam. Our section of the Wabash & Erie Canal happens to be just south of the point where canal exited the river.

While this crossing was certainly an engineering feat, it was not without risk. In times of flooding, the mules would have to work harder to keep up with the current. Otherwise, there was a danger of



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being swept away. According to records, one boat had to be reimbursed \$100 due to a lost mule!

Another related interesting fact: the canal's chief engineer, Jesse Williams, was strongly opposed to the consumption of alcohol, even though the substance was often ingratiated into the lives of canal laborers. Williams oversaw the construction of Dam #4 at Pittsburg and declared that no alcohol had been consumed in its construction. He hoped that this achievement would demonstrate that alcohol is not needed for construction after all! But as you might expect, the drinking culture did not drastically change as a result.

The Carrollton Bridge was also the first bridge to be constructed over the Wabash in Indiana, and what a structure it was. Imagine the scale: a covered wooden bridge **600 feet long!** The original bridge was destroyed in a storm, but you can still visit the modern version of the Carrollton Bridge, which is beautiful in its own regard!



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