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NEWS FROM THE WABASH & ERIE CANAL • DELPHI, INDIANA
April 2023



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**Volunteer Highlight:
Diana Allen**

Each month, we want to highlight one of our many volunteers in recognition of

Join Us for Spring Cleanup



Everybody knows that spring cleaning chores at your house are no fun. But it IS fun to maintain a community treasure while working outside with other dedicated volunteers! If you want to join the festivities AND enjoy a delicious, free lunch from the

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 Diana Allen.



What is your volunteer role at the Canal?

I have been the lead gardener at Canal Park, and I have also been co-leader with Linda Cooper. It's often the three of us [Anita Force, Linda Cooper, Diana Allen], but there are some other volunteers who have pitched in!

How many years have you been volunteering, and how did you get involved?

I am an Ohio girl that lived most of her life in the South. My husband's job at Indiana Packers brought me to Indiana in 2014. I had just gotten master gardener certified, and I wanted to continue that certification when I moved here. I met Linda Cooper through that, and she invited me to the Canal!

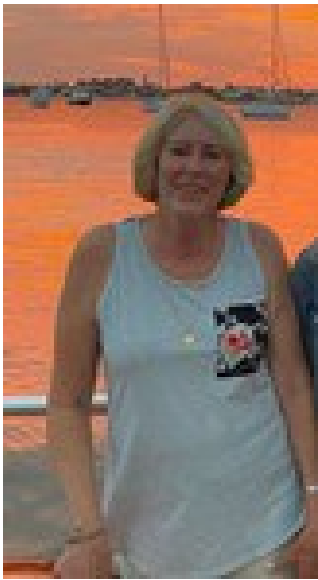
Delphi Psi Otes, join us at Canal Park on **May 6, 9AM-Noon**. It's a little over a week away, so mark your calendar! Check out the feast they prepared for us last year in the photo below:



We will clear brush, sticks, and debris from the Pioneer Village and the surrounding trails. We will also be tending to various tasks like mulching and making sure the lovely Canal Park gardens are set up for success this season.

Families and groups are welcome, but please send a quick email to Linda Cooper (lrcooper@outlook.com) to let us know how many people are coming with you!





What is your favorite part of volunteering at the Canal?

My favorite part of volunteering is learning from other volunteers. I always loved talking with Tom Johnson, who was a naturalist but also a blacksmith. We gardeners know about the plants, but it's great getting to know about different people and interests.

I like doing my part to make things happen, but we could always use more volunteers. It's amazing what a small group of dedicated people can do!

Do you have a favorite Canal Era fun fact?

Linda Cooper planted a medicinal garden in the park, and people don't realize that each family had to survive off their gardens. They weren't just vegetable gardens--they were medicinal gardens, herbal gardens, and they often included their own orchard if they could! They couldn't just run to the grocery store and pharmacy for all their food and medicine needs like we do today.

We will work together from 9AM until noon, and then we will settle in for lunch at the Speece picnic shelter. After lunch, we have a **NEW** event for you to enjoy: a narrated nature hike! David McCain will lead a group to Founders Point at 1PM, and he will share about the natural marvels along the towpath.

Whether you're looking for volunteer hours, a chance to get outdoors with other community-minded people, a free lunch, or an opportunity to learn about the canal's ecosystem, we invite you to join us for Spring Cleanup Day on Saturday, May 6!

Class Acts: Meet Your Teachers!



Taking historic skills workshops at the Wabash and Erie Canal is not only about learning the skill, but also getting to learn about fascinating people who teach the classes. Like the bobbin lace and tating teacher Carolyn Regnier, who at 9 years old taught herself how to make a tiny doll she wanted using tiny thread. Carolyn continued learning needle arts, sometimes with classes and sometimes teaching herself, and has gone on to teach for over 40 years. She makes all sorts of lace for many purposes (notecards, clothing decorations, doilies, etc.). Join her class and you may be in for even more special surprises. Even if bobbin lace and tating may not be a lifelong pursuit of yours, taking Carolyn's class is well worth the time to try this skill and get to know this fascinating person!

Between what Native Americans taught and what they already knew, pioneer families had their own medicinal cabinets!

Diana will soon be moving out of state, so we are looking for volunteers who are excited about creating beautiful spaces in Canal Park through gardening and landscaping. As Diana says, "It's worth your time to come up, preserve the stories, and help!"

Click the link below for more information about volunteering with us.

VOLUNTEER **TODAY!**

Prepping the Driveway

With the imminent arrival of Canal Season on May 20, we have been busy getting things ready for visitors at Canal Park. Of course, a huge part of the visitor experience is making sure people can get to us!



The driveway into Canal Park may not be owned by us, but our volunteers are an

And how about paper maker Linda Cooper? *[pictured above]* Do you know she used to be a commercial interior designer before she retired!? And that she's a master gardener, helping take care of the Wabash and Erie Canal gardens!? Ask her about the herb garden by the Fouts House and why she doesn't pull the rhubarb flower when most people do. Get to know her and her sources for paper decorations during her paper making class.



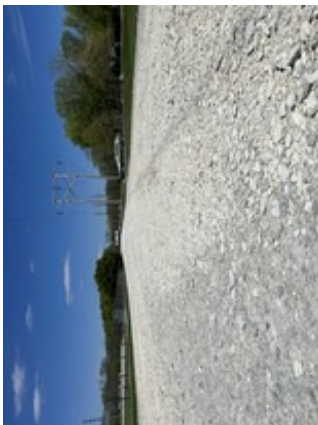
Then there's broom maker (and basket maker) Bev Larson, who is quiet, calming, and unassuming. Maybe that's because she gardens, has bee hives, and drinks herbal tea. She teaches a lot of classes with her personable individual style. Nature creeps into her creations, like the walnut shells the squirrels discarded used as basket decorations. You are first drawn in by the creativity and quality of Bev's work, but stay because of Bev's warmth. Take her class and find out for yourself.

incredible crew of good neighbors. Recently, when the spring rains created a series of craters at the entrance, Terry and Kenny (who keep the Carrollton Bridge site looking beautiful) jumped into action!

Loaded with some fine stone from our friends at US Aggregates, they used their dump trailer to make the entrance a lot smoother!



A little while later, another superstar volunteer, Tom Patrick, brought his truck and finished the length of the driveway with yet more stone from US Aggregates. We are unbelievably fortunate to partner with so many can-do volunteers AND local businesses who generously support our mission, like US Aggregates.



Last fall, several enjoyed Becky Crabb's hearth cooking class, which is repeated this Spring, plus Becky adds a hand quilting class. Warmth in the Fouts House comes not only from the fireplace but from Becky's genuine caring and contagious laugh. Learn more about Becky's love of historic lifestyles, in particular cooking and quilting when you take the hearth cooking and/or hand-quilting classes.



Canal Society Symposium Recap

A few weeks ago, the Canal Society of Indiana held a fascinating symposium titled "Trails-Rails: Canal Connections." This public event was free to attend and it offered plenty of fun new things to learn about!



Representing Canal Park, we had Dan McCain (president emeritus), Bill Lapcheska (treasurer and boat crew), Brian Stirm (train depot docent and Santa Claus extraordinaire), and Mike Tetrault (executive director).



CSI President Bob Schmidt presented "The Wabash & Erie Canal: Planners, Builders & Operators" to start the morning, and it was an insightful look into the people that shaped Indiana during the Canal Era. If you visit the [Canal Society's website](#), you can scroll down to find these biographies (plus MANY more!) ready for you to explore.

You'll be hard-pressed to find a better coopering teacher than the man with the actual name Cooper, Peter Cooper. He may seem a bit stern, like a hard task-master, but making a coopered product is more of an exact skill. In spare moments, ask Peter about his time in the Coast Guard, or about his time demonstrating at Feast of Hunter's Moon, or about his beloved collies. He is quite the storyteller and talker if you get him going! Taking one of his coopering classes will be quite an experience!

Seize the opportunity to learn a new skill or sharpen an existing one, as well as get to know some of these exciting people, some might even call them "characters." For more information, [visit our website!](#) If you'd like to get started with your enrollment for one of the classes, please check out [this online form](#). Or you can [print this form](#) and mail it in at your convenience. We hope to see you soon for some fun, historic learning!

Volunteer Efforts Go a "Log" Way



If you have visited Canal Park, you know that we cherish the Pioneer Village, a living history collection of historic and interpretive buildings. And as you may know with older buildings, they don't repair themselves!

The Loom House, located at the north corner of the Pioneer Village, has been in need of a new log. Thanks to the help of the intrepid Monday-Wednesday-Friday Crew, that new log is now installed!

Later on, Craig Berndt presented "The Canal Route Interurban," describing how the Interurban electric rail lines followed the former Wabash & Erie Canal route.



The exciting thing about this event was the packed room of people who had interests in canals and railroads. The story of infrastructure in Indiana is an interwoven tale that spans many decades of innovation and ingenuity.



The day wrapped up with some Canal Society news and business. This fall there will be an opportunity to explore the Wabash & Erie Canal further south! The tour, titled, "Sites, Signs, and Surprises: the Wabash & Erie Canal from Montezuma to Covington" will take place September 15-16 this year, and you're invited to attend! [Visit the Canal Society's events page for more details.](#)

For more information about the Canal Society of Indiana, please visit indcanal.org.

Did you know...?



The first step was to remove the old log and brace the structure for its replacement piece. Below we can see Mac Carlisle wielding the chainsaw to trim the new log to fit.



Once the new log was installed, the finishing touches were to



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calibrate the door frame and add chinking between the logs.

We believe that preservation and education go hand in hand. Maintaining historic structures is not an easy task, but it is well worth the effort. When you visit Canal Park, make sure you visit the Loom House, and you'll be amazed at the talent and stories of the artisans from the Wabash Weavers Guild. You can see them just about every Saturday afternoon 1-4PM during Canal Season (May 20-September 9).

We hope to see you there!

Visit Lafayette-West Lafayette Sponsors New Web Initiatives



One of our big goals here at the Canal is to help more people discover this wonderful community space. A huge piece of the puzzle is having a functional and informative website. Visit Lafayette-West Lafayette (<https://www.homeofpurdue.com/>) has stepped up in a big way this spring, generously granting the Canal \$2,500 to achieve this goal!

Going into this season, we are looking forward to updating our website with online reservations for canal boat tickets, museum tickets, Reed Case House tickets, and RV/tent camping! Plus, we will see a streamlined design. We can't wait to welcome the added visitors that this renovation will bring!

When the site is up and running, we will definitely be sharing the good news with you. In the meantime, make sure you visit homeofpurdue.com for all your excursions in the Greater Lafayette area! Visit Lafayette-West Lafayette is a tremendous resource for promoting the many local businesses and attractions in the region, and we are grateful for their partnership.

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