

# CURRENTS

Fall 2008 NEWSLETTER

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

## Bids Received for Our Boat Project

Michigana Contracting Co. of Plymouth, Indiana had the low bid for construction of the canal boat and warehouse for the Wabash & Erie Canal Association. Three other companies also participated in the bidding process. Bids ranged from \$1,101, 549 to \$2,318,900.

The warehouse will be the only product we will see under construction this fall and winter. It will be located along Canal Park Annex at the old canal turning basin below the Red Bridge. Duke Energy volunteers helped clear the trees at that spot last May. We will recycle those maple logs by sawing them into planks for the 'kick boards' in the Duke Energy-sponsored mule barn relay station.



The warehouse is slated for completion in late spring 2009. It will then be finished with painted murals on the loading dock doorways that will give the illusion of a working canal dock. In the meantime, the canal boat will be built by sub-contractor Scarano Boat Company of Albany, New York. President Dan McCain will visit its plant while on vacation in September.

The community will need to take note that the canal will have to be lowered for construction of the warehouse. We will shut off the water after Labor Day. The stone quarry will keep about 10 to 15 percent of the flow going so that holes along the bottom will stay full for fish to survive. We encourage as much fishing as possible since fish will have a struggle for survival with limited water. The fish are expected to reproduce and come back once the proper water level is resumed.

The Canal Board asks for the community's understanding about lowering the water level this winter, since we have no other choice. We anticipate having lots for everyone to celebrate when construction is completed and clean fresh water returns to the canal, ready for arrival of the new boat!

# Total Canal Experience Campaign Report

Gifts ranging from \$10 to \$30,000 are adding to our **THE TOTAL CANAL EXPERIENCE** fundraising campaign, with \$71,175.00 reported so far. But much more work remains to reach that goal of \$275,000 for construction of our boat and the warehouse that will double as storage for it.

Our most recent gift is from the Delphi High School Class of 1958, which has pledged \$2,000 to sponsor one of the dozen or so Interpretive Panels. This professionally designed sign will be placed in the vicinity of the playground boat and will feature differences between freight and passenger boats, line boats and packets. It will display the name of the Class as the sponsor.

Perhaps their leadership will inspire other groups – as well as individuals – to select a project to sponsor. We have 25 such panels and many more trailside exhibits to offer for sponsorship. If you have given previously to what we called the “Boat Fund” that amount is credited to this campaign and your additional gifts will help you reach a new giving level.

Contact any board member for more information. See donor form on page 4.

## “Sundays at the Canal” Launched

Something special was added to Summer Sundays this year. The Wabash & Erie Canal Association launched “Sundays at the Canal” through August 31. They offer an opportunity to step back in time when gas prices weren’t a problem, and stay close to home by spending Sundays at Canal Park in Delphi. There’s one more special “Sunday” to enjoy in August!



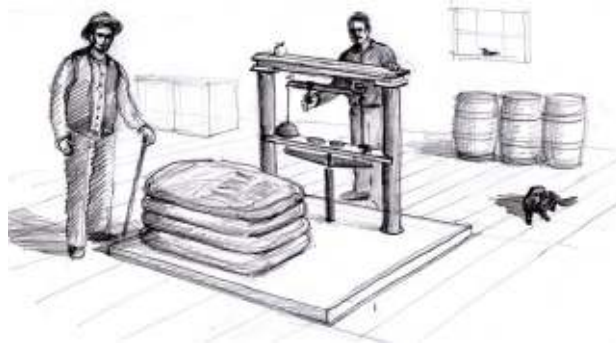
Area actors are presenting an original 20-minute skit, “Life on the Canal” at 1:30 p.m. each Sunday. The performances use the new playground canal boat in front of the Interpretive Center as a stage. Those attending are encouraged to bring lawn chairs or blankets for seating.

Chris Mayfield, a senior at Delphi Community High School, and Audrey Smith and Brittini Ballard, DCHS graduates, comprise the cast. Sara Brosman, the director, also is the writer of the clever script for the play. Thanks to all of them for giving their time and talent.

Narrated boat trips on the canal are available beginning at 2 p.m., and, of course, the Interpretive Center Museum is open from 1 to 4 p.m. Weather permitting, Moore Carriage Rides has had its carriage available for rides for \$5. Ten miles of trails including the two restored historic bridges, always beckon for walking or biking to complete a fun day for the whole family.

Thanks to Steve Gray, of Lafayette, a new member of the Canal Board of Directors, for arranging our “Sundays at the Canal.” He also coordinates the schedule for our canal boat captains.

*And remember that the Interpretive Center is open other days as well throughout the year. Our hours are 1 to 4 p.m. Thursday, Friday and Sunday, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays*



## Work Progressing on Canal Exhibit Sites

Our strong cadre of volunteers has taken advantage of good weather to accomplish work on several outdoor museum sites.

- Final touches are being put on the playground boat, a stationary full-sized canal boat especially designed to interest children as it gives them a concept of what a canal boat is like.
- Work continues on the mule barn that represents a relay station where tired horses were exchanged for fresh ones at intervals along the canal.
- Improvements are being made to the old railroad building that was donated and moved to a small park area where railroad tracks cross above the towpath trail. This area will be one of our prime exhibit areas to be developed with donations to our current campaign.
- Plans are being considered to move the ruins of large lime kiln from Stone Company property to a site along the canal where another lime kiln once stood.

## Good Weather, Good Attendance for Canal Days

Good weather brought good attendance for our Canal Days July 5 and 6. Although attendance records were not kept at every venue, at the Reed Case House we recorded visitors from 36 Indiana Cities, 10 states and three countries. They came from Augurn to Zionsville; Arizona to Texas, Canada to Venezuela!

Thanks to all of the craftsmen who participated with their talents on display and to our volunteers who helped with preparations, food, music, cleaning, hosting, leading activities and running the boat.

## We Lose a Charter Member

We regret to report the death on July 26 of John F. Klepinger, 96, who was a long-time resident and prominent banker in Delphi. John was a Charter Member of the Canal Association when it was incorporated in 1974. He was a familiar presence at our festivals and events until recent years. Our condolences to John's family and many friends.

## Canal Buffs Will Enjoy CSI Fall Tour

Canal sites from Terre Haute to Worthington will be explored by canal enthusiasts when they join in on the Fall Tour of the Canal Society of Indiana. "Across the Cross-Cut" is the theme for the October 10-12 tour.

The group will be touring the cross-cut portion of the Wabash & Erie Canal by bus and car. Among the sites will be the canal prism, locks, culverts, the Eel River and Birch Creek feeders and the Splunge and Birch Creek reservoirs. The group will also view the third largest railroad viaduct in the world and visit the remains of an iron furnace. Fall foliage through hills and vales will add to the enjoyment of the trip.

For more information or to register for the tour, contact Carolyn Schmidt at 260-432-0279 promptly.

# Honors Received for Bridge Restoration

The Wabash & Erie Canal Association has received a preservation award from Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana for its restoration of the Stearns Truss Bridge that now serves as a pedestrian bridge over a section of the Canal. The presentation was made by Marsh Davis, president of the statewide private foundation that devotes its effort to preservation of Indiana's built heritage.



Now dubbed the "Blue Bridge," the 1905 structure was slated for demolition before it was moved from its home in Pulaski County. Volunteers worked long hours taking it apart, restoring the parts and putting it back together for continued use as a trail connector.

Also receiving an award were the Carroll County Commissioners who were honored for recognizing the historic value and monetary savings of preserving – rather than replacing – the 1927 Carrollton Bridge over the Wabash River. That bridge site also is important to Wabash & Erie Canal history. At one end of the bridge are the sites of Lock #32 and the Mentzer Tavern, a popular stop-off for canal travelers.



The bridge was dedicated and the canal sites recognized in ceremonies on June 15.

# Children Study Bridge Design in Archi-Camp

During the second Archi-Camp in June, children studied bridge design, visiting our bridges across the canal and other sites. Studying the architecture of various structures is the aim of the Archi-Camp program. Leaders hope to offer another session next spring or summer.

This year's program was coordinated by the Canal Association and Suzanne Stannis, of Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana. They went along the canal to see the stone arch, bowstring and Stearns Truss bridges, then went to Adams Mill and floated the Wildcat while studying the wooden covered bridge there.

## Volunteer Call-Out!

**Put this date on your calendar – 7 p.m. November 6**

### **Come to the Canal Center to learn about opportunities for volunteering**

Volunteer opportunities range from hosting at the Canal Center Interpretive Museum to running the canal boat, maintaining trails, building outdoor exhibits, conducting tours (especially for school children), demonstrating crafts, cleaning, painting, building maintenance, yard and flower bed maintenance – there's plenty of work to do!

## What's Happening at the Canal

- Thank you to Margaret Groninger, of Kokomo and her brother Fernando Trevino, of Delphi, for sponsoring a bench in honor and memory of their parents, Lupe and Alvessa Trevino. Benches are available for \$150 each.
- A colorful new brochure for the Total Canal Experience campaign is now available. Thanks to Terry Lacy for the design and to Steve Gray for procuring a \$500 grant from Met Life to fund the printing. Pick up a copy of the brochure at the Canal Center to learn about the exhibits and interpretive panels available for sponsorship.
- Thanks to Mary Crary, Karen Bradshaw, Sue Ann Cornell, David Kelly and other helpers who scheduled and conducted the school tours last spring. It was not easy filling the duties so ably handled by Susan Feller before her untimely death. The "tour crew" could use YOUR help for the fall tours!
- The bus was loaded to near capacity for the Canal Association-sponsored tour to LaSalle, Illinois. The highlight was riding LaSalle's new canal boat on the I & M canal, and seeing their well-equipped visitor center. Canal volunteers learned a lot to apply to our own situation.
- **If you have not paid your 2008 membership, please use the form on this page to return with your check. Thanks for keeping your membership current.**

Visit us at [www.wabashanderiecanal.org](http://www.wabashanderiecanal.org)