

# CURRENTS

**SPRING 2009 NEWSLETTER**

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

## Craftsman to Speak at Annual Meeting

The public is invited to attend the Annual Meeting of the Wabash & Erie Canal Association Tuesday evening, April 21, at the Canal Center along the Canal on Washington Street in Delphi. Refreshments will be served at 6:30 p.m. The meeting will follow at 7:00 p.m.

Our speaker will be Amos Schwartz, of Berne in Adams County. Amos directs a crew of Amish craftsmen wherever there is a need for their special skills. They have rehabilitated many log cabins, covered bridges and barns as well as buildings such as inns at several State Parks. Amos has a special interest in bridges, and directed the rehabilitation of the Duck Creek Aqueduct at Metamora.



Amos Schwartz will visit some of our Spring projects like this dock underway by Canal volunteers

Amos will be spending the day of the meeting touring the Canal Park and our trails system to see the structures we have rehabilitated or built to bring living history of the canal era to our visitors.

Canal Association officers will update the audience on the construction of our replica canal boat and projects that volunteers are undertaking along the canal trails. Several special contributors will be recognized. During a brief business meeting, directors will be elected.

***Please join us for an interesting evening.***

# When Will the Boat Arrive?



Mark Saturday June 6, 2009 on your calendar as THE BIG DAY!

On this day the newly constructed replica canal boat will be officially launched and ready for passengers. This day is also National Trails Day and our traditional time to recognize volunteers.

Volunteers will be honored at noon with a free lunch and presentation of shirts and hats, then the first group of volunteers (plus official guests) will board the boat for its first trip on the famous Wabash & Erie Canal. The public rides will begin at 2:00 p.m.

The boat is scheduled for arrival in Delphi in late May, but it won't be available to the public until the Canal Boat Captain and his crew have taken a shake-down cruise and become familiar with handling the vessel. The keys will then be handed over to the Canal Association on June 3rd.

Captain Steve Gray is looking for crew members. Call him at 765-447-1627 if you can help. The Board is determining charges for rides for individuals and for groups, determined to keep the costs as low as possible to sustain operation of the boat.

Meantime, the construction of the Warehouse at the turning basin at Canal Park Annex is nearly finished. The building can be seen from the stone bridge, rising from the edge of the Canal. It will house the boat in inclement weather, but is being built to resemble a canal-era warehouse. It will feature painted murals on the doors that will give the illusion of seeing work being done loading shipments on a boat inside the warehouse. The 8 x 10 foot colorful murals are items listed in the Total Canal Experience Campaign. Contact Dan McCain 765-412-4308 for more information about this and other naming opportunities – we need 1-2 sponsors soon if we are to complete these murals by the BIG DAY June 6th. Pledges for payment up to four years for campaign items are accepted.

## Total Canal Experience Campaign Progress

Our "Total Canal Experience" fund-raising campaign has been effective in getting exhibits sponsored at a rate that is keeping our volunteer crews busy. A generous list of exhibits and interpretive panels is available for sponsorship, and they are scheduled for construction as they are claimed by donors. Pledges of support can be spread over two to four years.

**Exhibits:** At present, crews are doing construction projects along the canal while water level is down and work in the channel can be accomplished. An impressive **guard lock** is one of the special exhibits in the water. The lock is located below Canal Park, near the tunnel where the trail goes under the railroad, and is scheduled for completion this spring. This major exhibit is awaiting a sponsor!

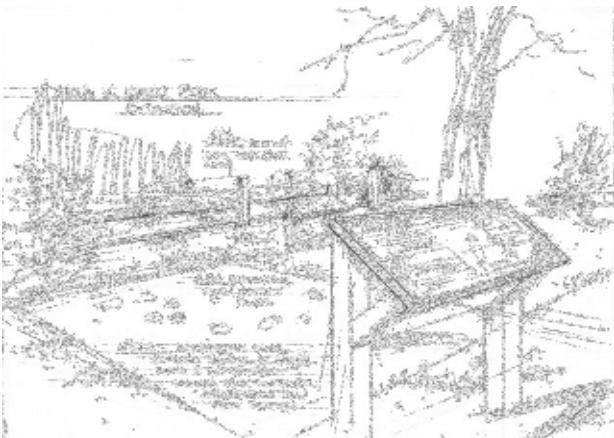


Meantime, a **chicken coop** is a sponsored exhibit destined for placement in the Pioneer Village area of Canal Park. This small building was built in Ed Gruber's heated barn on cold weather days. Typical of old-time chicken coops, it stands on tall legs to keep critters away from the eggs and hens. The crew made use of white oak left from the Stearns Truss bridge and guard lock projects.

Two other sponsored exhibits will be added to the Pioneer Village soon: A display of period **fencing**, and an **outhouse**, that were essential to life in the 1850s.

Work is progressing on the **Mule Barn/Relay Station**. Thanks to Lenard Robison, of Indianapolis, for the donation of two handsome harnesses that will be featured items on display in the Tack Room portion of the barn. A television screen will be used to show a three-minute video on how to harness a mule as a part of this interactive exhibit.

The **Playground Boat** is one of the largest sponsored exhibits and a popular one, even in winter months. After an arson fire destroyed much of it, the community responded quickly with money, labor and materials to restore it. Only painting and installing of shutters remain to be done.



**Interpretive Panels:** In addition to the exhibits in the Canal Park and on the trails, six of the 2,000 handsome Interpretive Panels already have sponsors. All of these additions will make a visit to Canal Park a complete immersion in canal history – a TOTAL canal experience – starting with the indoor museum and spreading to the Park, the Canal itself and the miles of towpath trails.

# We Welcomed 30 New Members in 2008

Thirty new members or member families have come to us this year, not only from various locations in Indiana but from Ohio, Texas and Maryland. Those joining us in 2008 were:

From Delphi: Dick Krieg Motors, Angela Jackson, John and Chris Neumann, Dave and Janie Smith, and Wallmann's Foods. From Flora: Rob, Carol and Kevin Ives; Doug and Sandy Simpson.

Lafayette/West Lafayette: Bill and Bonnie Andrews, Eileen, Aaron and Colette Booth, Dr. and Mrs. Guthrie Carr, Michael Grey, Susan Lynch, Vern Ransom, Michael and Julie Seikel, James and Mary Jo Turley, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Weintraut, and Terry and Shirley West.

From around Indiana: Virginia Bushong, Michigan Shores; Butler, Fairman & Seufert, Inc., Indianapolis; William and Barbara Dishman, Laurel; Warren and Pamela Dodrill, Logansport; Ruby Gaston, Urbana; Floyd and Jane Lord, Remington; Miami Co. Historical Society, Peru; Dallas and Gloria Parish, Churubusco; Richard and Juanita Sheehan, Battle Ground; and Tom Spackman, Monticello.

From out of state: Victor Case, Akron, Ohio; Curtis Johnsen, Conroe, Texas; and Donna Ward, Phoenix, Maryland.

**We encourage everyone to maintain a current membership. There's a handy "dues and donations" form on the last page for your 2009 membership if you have not already paid.**

## This 1800s Canal Is Going High Tech!

**Touch Screen Monitor:** We have purchased a touch screen monitor and appropriate software, thanks to a \$2,700 grant from the SIA Foundation. A program is being developed that will highlight 10 interesting historic sites along the local Wabash & Erie Canal towpath trails.

The monitor will be placed in the lobby of the Canal Center where the public can access it to find descriptions of these sites. Our visitors can choose the ones they want to see and then walk to them on the trails. As Interpretive Panels are completed, they will be placed at each site to inform visitors about their history. The touch screen monitor also can be taken to conferences, expos and to meetings as a stand-alone unit. Our thanks to SIA Foundation for this welcome support.

**Interactive Web Site:** At its March meeting, the Archives Committee accepted and reviewed a new website program that allows interaction with the public. The program was set up by Ron Newlin and is considered a "social site," making it possible for invited persons to share information. For instance, someone having a question about the Wabash & Erie Canal, the Canal Center, the boat's schedule, for instance, can post the question for others on the site to answer. It's possible that discussions might ensue, or research might take place through an exchange of postings.

To join, go to <http://canalcenter.ning.com/?xgsi=1>

## New Trail Development Approved

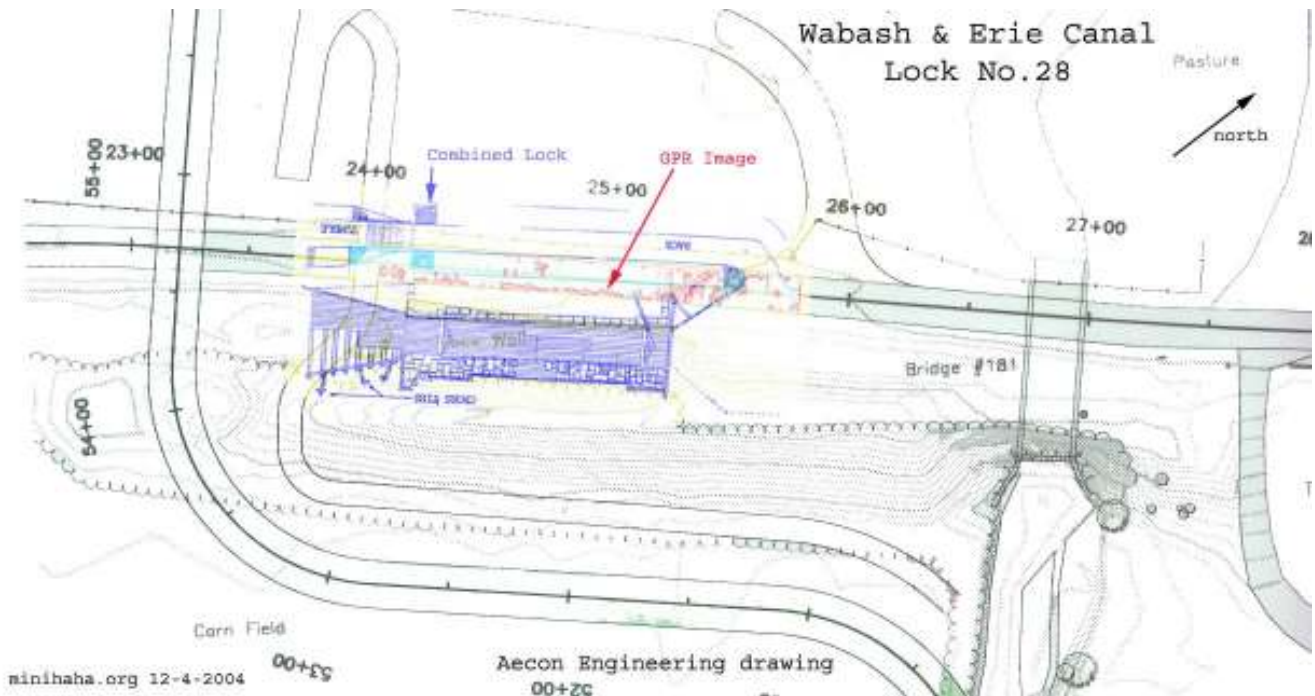
At a meeting March 5, Delphi Historic Trails volunteers made the decision to go ahead with development of a trail along the old Interurban rail bed through east Delphi. This will be the first new trail to be developed since completion of the Monon High Bridge Trail five years ago.

The new trail will follow the route traveled by the early 1900s Interurban line known as the Fort Wayne and Wabash Valley Interurban electric transportation system. It came through Delphi, connecting the town with other nearby cities and towns. The ticket station was on Washington Street where it crosses Deer Creek.

Ultimately the trail will serve as a connector through near downtown Delphi from opposite ends of the city. Hikers and bikers will be able to start at the present Trailhead Park southwest of the city, or from a newly proposed trailhead at the east entrance of the new Hoosier Heartland Highway.

Work clearing brush and debris will begin on Earth Day, which is April 18 this year.

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## Burnett's Creek Arch Project Updated

Of interest to canal buffs is a report on the Burnett's Creek Arch project announced earlier this month by Carroll County officials. The arch was an important structure along the route of the Wabash & Erie Canal as it headed toward Delphi from the northeast. The 160-year old stone bridge carried the Canal across Burnett's Creek. Adjacent to the Arch is a "Composite Lock" with a 10 foot lift. It was built of stone and timbers. Crossing this area today is a county road known as Towpath Road.

Plans have been outlined for a two-pronged project – rehabilitating the bridge and building a small county park at the location, including limited parking for viewing this unusual structure and the adjoining composite lock.

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*Please stop at the Canal Center, visit our Web site, or contact a board member for a list of exhibits and interpretive panels available for sponsorship. **All donations, of all sizes, are welcome. This form provides a place for your contribution.***

Make checks to Wabash & Erie Canal Inc.  
Send to return address at right

Wabash & Erie Canal Inc.  
50 Redwood Court  
Lafayette, IN 47905

Enclosed is \$\_\_\_\_\_ membership (min. \$10/individual)

\$\_\_\_\_\_ donation

\$\_\_\_\_\_ Total Canal Experience donation

\$\_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL

### Dates to Remember

Earth Day, work on new trail – April 18  
Heritage Transportation Festival – Father's Day weekend, June 20  
Official launching of canal boat at Canal Park – June 6  
Canal Days Festival – July 4 and 5 at Canal Park  
Old Settlers Meeting at Canal Park – August 8

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**Visit us on the web ~ [wabashanderiecanal.org](http://wabashanderiecanal.org)**