

# CURRENTS

SPRING 2006 NEWSLETTER

*Published quarterly by Carroll Co. Wabash & Erie Canal Inc. for its members, donors and friends*

## *The Winamac/Stearns Truss Bridge*

## Saving a Piece of Indiana History

Carroll County Wabash & Erie Canal, Inc. has been entrusted with the rescue and rehabilitation of a one-of-a-kind historic Indiana bridge. The Winamac/Stearns Truss Bridge was disassembled and moved early in March from its location in Pulaski County to Delphi where it will grace the VanScoy towpath trail.

Because the bridge had to be moved by March 31 from its location across a drainage ditch, Pulaski County offered the bridge to W&E Canal Association in order to save this "one-of-a-kind" iron structure. The sale price -- \$10!

But moving it was not free. Canal members, friends and bridge enthusiasts responded almost immediately to the call for dollars. A grant of \$2,500 from Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana was a welcome boost to funding the move.

Thanks to the efforts of a crew of many volunteers as well as professionals. the unique 1905 bridge, built by the Winamac Bridge Co., was dismantled and moved to Delphi. Built with a series of huge pins, the bridge was designed to be moved. It was rusty and had no floor, but it will be restored to its original beauty to provide an easy connection to towpath trails to the south.

Work began January 9 when the crew members gathered at the site northeast of Francesville with tools and an especially good mix of penetrating oil to attack the rust from decades of neglect. The disassembly crew received support from a giant extendable forklift from One Source Rental in Lafayette, Jack Cohee's excavating equipment, Rollin Grabill's portable sawmill, Tom Flora's semi-truck and trailer, and crane operators Dave Schlick from Logansport and Bud Stahl from Kokomo.

Thanks to all of the crew, many of whom were volunteers who also helped move and restore the Paint Creek Bridge that now crosses the Canal above the stone bridge. And thanks to donors who helped finance the Stearns Truss Bridge move. If you would like to help defray the cost of restoration, please use the form on page 4 and mark "Bridge Fund" on the form and/or your check.

## W & E Canal Association Annual Meeting Tuesday April 18

Members, donors and friends of Wabash & Erie Canal Association are cordially invited to the association's Annual Meeting Tuesday evening April 18, at 7 p.m.

A dessert bar will be ready and waiting as people arrive. The short business meeting will be followed with a very interesting presentation by Sharon Kirk Clifton, a skilled storyteller.

Dressed in the authentic attire of an Indiana Abolitionist woman, Sharon will tell first-person stories of the Underground Railroad, centered at a farm in southeastern Indiana in 1859. Her presentation will include true stories of Indiana's role in that great effort as well as of nationally-known figures.

There is no charge.

# Grant Assures Canal Boat's Construction

A generous gift from NCHS of Lafayette in December 2005 now assures the building of a replica canal boat for the pleasure of future visitors to Canal Park.

Dan McCain, Canal Board President, announced the perfect Christmas present – a grant of \$220,000 from NCHS, a non-profit medical services corporation that makes capital grants in an eight-county area.

The grant represents the amount that the Canal Association would have had to raise from individuals and businesses to match the grants that had been obtained earlier for engineering work and actual construction of the boat as well as a wooden-sided structure in the style of a canal-era warehouse that will house the boat in off seasons. A boat dock and informational signage about the canal also will be added along the canal.

With the grants from Indiana Rural Development Council and the Indiana Department of Transportation now matched, the Canal Association will be focusing on obtaining and setting aside funds in an endowment that will assure the future care and upkeep of the boat, the Interpretive Center and all property now under the management of the Association.

Until the boat is actually built and ready for passengers – which is estimated to be at least two years – the pontoon passenger boat will be running on the weekends in good-weather months.

## Spring Means Outdoor Clean-up Time!

**Set aside Saturday, April 22 as a day to join canal volunteers, youth groups and trails enthusiasts for PROJECT W.E.E.D (Wabash & Erie Earth Day).** Groups and individuals will gather at Canal Park, 1030 North Washington Street in Delphi at 9 o'clock that morning for flag raising and their assignments for jobs cleaning and picking up debris along the extensive trail system and for working on flower beds and landscaping in Canal Park.

The Canal Association sponsors the event with support from the USDA/NRCS "Earth Team." Those wearing Earth Team white hats are designated as "captains" and will direct work and answer questions at the various sites.

"A workday is a 'fun day' when we pull together as volunteers," Dan McCain, Canal Association President, said. "An eager crew can accomplish a lot, and will discover that finishing a task and realizing how this may help this dynamic community is one of the best paybacks that volunteers get. Volunteerism comes from the heart."

Work crews may be assigned to various locations on other trails that may require driving to the sites. Everyone will return to the Canal Park shelter at noon for lunch served by members of the local Psi Iota Xi sorority. Some volunteers may tackle some jobs inside the Canal Center as well.

Dress in durable clothing, long pants, work shoes (no sandals) and gloves. No pets, please. If you bring your own hand tools, mark them with your name.

## We Welcome Our New Members

Congratulations to two new LIFE MEMBERS! Indiana Packers Co. designated \$1,000 of a recent \$5,000 gift to pay a Life Membership. Marlene Kiesling Konsek, of Neenah, Wisconsin, completed her Life Membership in January, using the installment plan for payment of \$1,000 over four or five years.

We also are pleased to welcome new members in 2005. From Delphi: Matt and Beth Burkhart, Virgil and Beulah Gray, Aaron and Daniela Green, David P. Krause, Margaret Joan Marchand, Gordon L. Stevens and Tri Kappa Associate Chapter. From Lafayette/ West Lafayette: Dan Barry, Doris and Joy Blair, Diane Davis, Susan Feller, John and Marybeth Foster, Susan Ransom, Gladys M. Sharvelle, Erin Shultz, Ken and Sue Spiker, Larry G. Weise, and Virginia White. Across Indiana: William Bancroft, Indianapolis; David Hovde, Mulberry; Bill and Jane Kearns, Flora; James E. Martin, Greentown; Scott and Arli Miller, Noblesville; Len and Joanne Mysliwiec and Louise A. Larsen, Ft. Wayne; Alan and Marilyn Nacke, Battle Ground; John and Susan Robertson, Kokomo; Deborah and Anna Rotman, South Bend. Out of State: Richard and Karen Brown, Okemos, MI; Jane Greiner, Empire, MI; Marian Coble Heck, Whittier, CA; Dr. Darrell G. Herd, Potomac Falls, VA. *Thanks for the support and vote of confidence from all these new members!*

# Six Counties Plan to Link Byways and Bikeways

Carroll County is in the center of a six-county grouping that is studying ways to link their routes with each other for hikers, bikers and motorists to reach natural and scenic attractions. Possibilities were explored at a meeting at the Canal Center March 9.

Ray Irwin, new Greenways and Bikeways Director at Indiana Department of Transportation spoke to the workshop participants who came from White, Cass, Howard, Clinton, Tippecanoe and Carroll counties. This was the second meeting of the group.

Meeting chairman Rory Robinson, from the National Park Service, encouraged the participants to identify river trail systems and record them on maps. In addition to streams and current trail systems, the group was challenged to identify low-use blacktop roads that lead to scenic or historic attractions and are safe and enjoyable. Later, hiking and biking trails using abandoned rail beds or other corridors to connect attractions across county lines may be identified.

A Purdue Landscape Architecture class is coordinating these efforts under the direction of Professor Bernie Dahl. The goal is to mark these trails and routes and publish maps, encouraging public participation so that special sites can be enjoyed by more visitors to any of the six counties. This spring the Carroll County Heritage Tourism group is releasing a revised tour guide that will contain already marked byways in Carroll County.

## Tunnel Now Connects Underhill Towpath Trail

For several years the Underhill Towpath Trail has not had a clear path to connecting trails because of the railroad spur that crosses the trail behind the Canal Interpretive Center. Work began this winter to fashion a tunnel under the road bed when Delphi Limestone Company gave permission for track removal and donated many tons of stone fill to the project.

Volunteers and contractor Jack Cohee installed a very large metal conduit, wide enough and tall enough for pedestrians to walk through or bikers to traverse. It provides an underpass under the railroad so that the trails can be safely joined. It will serve as a mid-way connecting point of the trails.

On National Trails Day June 3, the Canal Association will have a special ribbon cutting ceremony to formally open this trail connector.

## Mural Project Continues to Progress

We announced in the Winter newsletter that the Canal Society of Indiana had agreed to sponsor another painting for the lobby of the Canal Conference and Interpretive Center. CSI also issued a challenge to the Canal Society of Ohio to sponsor a painting. CSO took up the challenge and has offered to sponsor a painting of a canal scene in the Toledo harbor area, which is the northeastern end of the Wabash & Erie Canal. The Indiana group's painting is of a canal scene in Evansville, the southern-most reach of the canal. Thanks to both Societies for their support!

## Put on Your Walking Shoes for Spring Trail Walks

**Spring Wildflower Walk in the Woods** – April 27, 6:30 p.m. Terry Lacy's Rock Creek farm.

**A Walking Meditation** – May 13, 2:00 p.m. Meet David McCain at Trailhead Park

**Physical Fitness Walks** – Once a month, led by Lois Johnston, RN. Leaving 1:00 p.m. from the Canal Center on Saturdays March 25, June 3, July 15 and September 16.

**Spring Cemetery Walk** – April 9 at 2:00 p.m. Meet at IOOF Cemetery, Delphi. Narrated short walk will cover the lives of canal pioneers. A fall walk is scheduled for September 9.

**Riley Poetry Reading** – July 22 at 7:00 p.m. on High Bridge Trail. Park at Sherry Mears farm, 6405 W. 300 North and walk down the lane.

**For Trail Walks by appointment:** Call Mark A. Smith at 765-563-3349 or [smith4881@earthlink.net](mailto:smith4881@earthlink.net). Walks also will be posted on the Canal Hotline 765-564-6572.

**Visit Our Website at [www.wabashanderiecanal.org](http://www.wabashanderiecanal.org)**

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All members and donors receive our newsletter

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## Canal Notes Worth Noticing!

- **VOLUNTEER CALL-OUT MEETING at 7 p.m. Thursday April 13 at the Canal Center.** Sign up for the volunteer job of your choice. We are especially looking for “**Canal Boat Captains**” to run the pontoon boat during the spring and summer weekends and special occasions.
- Have you paid your 2006 membership? Notices were sent in January. Perhaps that bright yellow letter is still awaiting your check (or use the form above). Both memberships and donations are tax deductible as allowed by law.
- Interested in Yoga to calm that stress? David McCain, a movement educator and certified Kundalini Yoga instructor, invites canal volunteers to weekly Yoga and meditation sessions every Thursday at 5 p.m. Other relaxation exercises are incorporated such as Chi Kung and Tai Chi movements. Bring a mat, a blanket and pillow. Other community people also are welcome by making a donation to the Canal Association.
- Mark Sunday June 18 on your calendar for our Transportation Fair 1-5 p.m. We encourage families to attend and honor their fathers. Bring a picnic or enjoy pop, ice cream and pop corn offered at the Snack Shack. Trails walk at 3 p.m. Trolley rides and other events scheduled.
- Thanks to Bradley Nielsen of Medaryville, who earned his Eagle Scout award for nominating the Stearns Bridge for the National Register and clearing the site in preparation for the move.
- We are in need of bicycle racks for the Canal Park. Contact Dan McCain 765564-6297.
- To rent the conference rooms in the Canal Center for your business meeting, reception or party, call Judy Stirm at the Canal Center 765-564-2870 or at home 765-564-6378.

***Interpretive Center museum and the gift shop hours  
10 to 4 on Saturdays and 1 to 4 on Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays***