

VOLUNTEER UPDATE – MAY 18, 2009

## UP, UP AND AWAY - ALL ABOARD



Last Friday was a special day in Albany, NY. At least it was for a few observers including myself, and two members of the American Canal Society. In addition Scarano Boat Company staff was there to perform their customary "Sea Trials" on our new replica canal boat. The waterway in the background is the Hudson River. It connects New York State's fabled Erie Canal with New York Harbor.



As the boat touched the water the true canal enthusiasts shouted Hip-Hip-Horay as it started floating. This beautiful 54 foot long craft has been inside the boat factory under construction for the past 7 months. The DELPHI is being produced by the firm that has built more replica canal boats for the United States than any other firm. In the US there are only 14 such replicas operating on canals.



Beautifully appointed and with its bright colors typical of the boats of the mid-1800s, this boat will carry 45 people. There are benches to seat 32 and access for handicap travelers. By rearranging the floor seating and placing tables between the seats a meal or a meeting could be chartered. Provisions will be made for "off time" rental for these special events including transporting a bride, groom and their attendants to their reception in the Conference Center next to the dock.



The mostly open architecture of the roof will be appreciated on nice days. When the sun might be too hot or a rain shower comes there is a canvas awning with plastic windows that can be pulled over the white supports. Though the upper center beam is strong enough there will be no passenger access on the roof as clearance under the stone arch bridge is close.



Looking down the trail entering Canal Park Annex this new Warehouse becomes the dominant fixture. This new building will house the boat inside nightly and in the winter allow the boat to be suspended above the ice. A security system is in place for protection from vandallism, fire and high water.



Viewing the Warehouse from the Washington Street Stone Arch bridge provides an interesting historical view of the original "turning basin" used by the canal boats in the 1850s. The looks of the new structure mimic the fabled Speece Brother's Warehouse at Carrollton five miles to the north. Murals on the white doors will be created to look as though workers inside were loading cargo. For this to materialize the Canal Association is asking for a naming donor to make this possible. Call 765-412-4308 if you are that donor.

Watch for announcements of the dedication of this boat and warehouse tentatively set for Saturday, June 20th at 10 am. Last Friday's deluge of rain caused the canal to fill prematurely. This challenges the expected opening date scheduled for that Saturday because the canal will have to be lowered again for removal of the last obstruction (a solid rock ledge) that could scrape the bottom of the new boat.

***CAPTAIN STEVE GRAY SEZ:***

*We need volunteer crew members for THE DELPHI both to operate the boat and to give historical narration. If you have an interest, call 765-447-1627 or email [Steve1948@aol.com](mailto:Steve1948@aol.com)*