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January 2011 / NEWS FROM THE WABASH & ERIE CANAL • DELPHI, INDIANA

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Disaster Hits One of the Canal's Most Dedicated Directors

A fire at Ed and Melverine Gruber's farm west of Delphi on January 5 totally destroyed their beautiful, century-old country home. Nothing was left recognizable, except for the nearby Round Barn and farm sheds. The fire happened when both were away.

Ed was with me and four other M-W-F volunteers that day, as we were inspecting an old iron bridge near Greencastle (see article below). The six of us had completed our investigation and left the bridge site to come home when we got the disparaging news from the sheriff through a phone call.

The rest of the ride home was solemn knowing the raging fire was very serious. When we got there, the many fire trucks were busy extinguishing what very little remained. They even had to break down the floor over Ed's famous "wine cellar" to finish putting out the fire.

As we reflect on the accomplishments at the Canal over the past 40 years (yes, organized in 1971), we have to count the remarkable efforts of a most dedicated individual. Ed Gruber has been on the Canal Board longer than anyone has ever been.

Ed retired as a TWA pilot in 1979 and returned to Delphi from New York. He began volunteering at the Canal and was quickly was absorbed into our board as a director. He later served as treasurer, and for two decades, he diligently processed all the bills and receipts--MANUALLY. No computer enters Ed's figures.

Over the past 14 years, Ed has been a leading volunteer on the year around M-W-F (Monday-Wednesday-Friday) construction crew, and Ed's exceptional skills and many tools have been put to good use. The crew has assembled a remarkable list of accomplishments, including the restoration of two old iron bridges, which have been placed on Canal trails.

The crew has also assembled the majority of indoor exhibits in the dozen galleries of the award-winning Canal Interpretive Center. They



Former Indiana First Lady, Judy O'Bannon, will be the keynote speaker at the **Canal Association Annual Meeting** on Tuesday, April 19. The event is open to the public and will run from 7:00 - 8:30 pm. Light refreshments provided.

For more information, see our [online event calendar](#) or call 765.564.2870.

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS...

Thurs., Feb 17, 7pm
Volunteer Callout

Sat., Apr 16
PROJECT W.E.E.D.
(Wabash and Erie Earth Day)

Sat., June 4
National Trails Day --
Volunteer Recognition

Sat.-Sun., July 2-3
Canal Days

For more information, check out our [EVENT CALENDAR](#)>

continue to adorn the canal trails with interesting, major interpretive exhibits like the recent Lime Kiln rehabilitation. This winter, the crew has been working out at Ed's barn on the "pull me" boat that will simulate for kids how to tow a boat.

After his first wife died four years ago, Ed married Melverine. She has also been dynamic in her involvement with the Canal volunteers as a docent, cook, tour guide, and more.

We at the Canal say "hats off" to the Grubers as they grieve the loss of their home. We all want to help them find a way back into the comfort zone of a home again. Their family will be of great assistance, but we can help too.

If you would like to send an encouraging note or want to know how you can help, please email me at mccain@carlnet.org. I will print out your well wishes and give it to the Grubers.

*Thanks for your concerns. Peace,
Dan McCain
President, Wabash & Erie Canal Association*

No Shortage of Winter Projects

Volunteers keep busy on future Canal attractions



Dave Smith and Roy Patrick load the "pull me" boat that was constructed out at Ed Gruber's barn. This solid laminated model of a canal boat will be fitted on a rail in the ground alongside towpath trail. Kids will be challenged to figure out how to move the boat in the tradition of mules pulling full size boats in the 1850s. The boat will be painted to look similar to the Delphi that plies the waterway in summer months.

OPPORTUNITY FOR VENDORS

In order to provide more for our visitors, we are seeking vendors to double as Canal docents. Artisans and craftpersons can sell their handcrafted items while welcoming guests and sharing information about Pioneer Village. For more information, please contact Jean Howell of Noble Bikes at 574.965.2025 or jhowell@ytci.com.

HELP US CREATE THE TOTAL CANAL EXPERIENCE!



Bring history alive by sponsoring an exhibit or interpretive panel.

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Your financial partnership restores and preserves a rare, important piece of early American history and provides hands-on learning opportunities for people of all ages.

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VOLUNTEER



Working indoors, the volunteers are crafting another unique display - exhibits for nearby trailside installation. This frame for a "shaker" box will illustrate how lime kiln products were made pure by shaking out the impurities before packaging and sending in barrels.



A soft white snow sets off the completed Lime Kiln in the Red Bridge Settlement (formerly called Canal Park Annex). The once busy industrial/commercial area featured a "turning basin" with docks and warehouse facilities, as well as the Lime Kilns of Hubbard and Harley.



Do you enjoy sharing history with others? We need docents to take groups on guided tours throughout the year. **To find out more, contact us at 765.564.2870.**

We have many volunteer opportunities to suit your skills and time!

[Find out more>](#)

,,,or attend our Volunteer Callout on Thursday, February 17 at 7 pm!



A week ago some of the M-W-F crew went to Greencastle to look at a vacant iron bridge that will become available this spring. They wanted to gain insight into what repairs it might need and determine complexity of doing a restoration and placement in Canal Park. It could be used as a connector bridge between Pioneer Village and the proposed County Historical Society's new headquarters.



The bridge is tall and long (160 feet), and it is a work of art. It is considered a "lightweight" span, so it would probably be similar to the restoration of our Stearns Truss...only with much more to do, as it is over twice as long!



Artistry of iron can add significant attraction to the canal waterway. The real beauty is that this span could become a means to see the boat attraction by standing over the center of the canal while it leaves port.



Can you just imagine looking at this span from underneath as the Canal Boat passes by? There will also be room for the trail near water level on both sides to pass under the ends of the bridge.

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