

River Currents

BANKS OF THE WABASH

April 2014

this issue...

- Mini-grants reminder
- Nominees for River Rewards Sought
- Steamboat plans
- Photos wanted
- Poetry & the River



Banks of the Wabash, Inc. is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving, improving and promoting the significant historical and natural resources of the Wabash River Corridor.

Banks of the Wabash, Inc. works to improve the quality of life for residents and enhance the experience for guests from outside the corridor. Banks of the Wabash focuses on the nineteen counties in Indiana that touch on the Wabash—Indiana's premier river.

Annual Meeting Focuses on "200 Years Along the Wabash"

Annual Meeting at Clabber Girl Museum
900 Wabash Avenue, Terre Haute IN

Directions: From the US 150 & US 41 intersection in Terre Haute go east on US 150 to 9th Street. Go north one block to Wabash Avenue. The Clabber Girl building and museum is at the northeast corner of the intersection.

In the last newsletter BOW introduced its bicentennial project called *200 Years Along the Wabash*: a series of 200 programs and events to mark and celebrate the Wabash River and the communities along it and its major tributaries. BOW's annual meeting will expand on this project and we hope many of you can come or send us ideas for programs/events in your community. Here is the agenda.

9:30-10 Registration and networking. People can renew their memberships or join and become members. Meet others who share your interest in the Wabash River and learn what's up elsewhere.

10 a.m. Terre Haute's Year of the River. Mary Kramer of *Art Spaces*, Terre Haute will give us a rundown of this yearlong series of events that was the spark for BOW Bicentennial project, *200 Years along the Wabash*. If it works out, there will be a representative from Indiana's State Bicentennial Commission available to talk about their plans for 2016 as well.

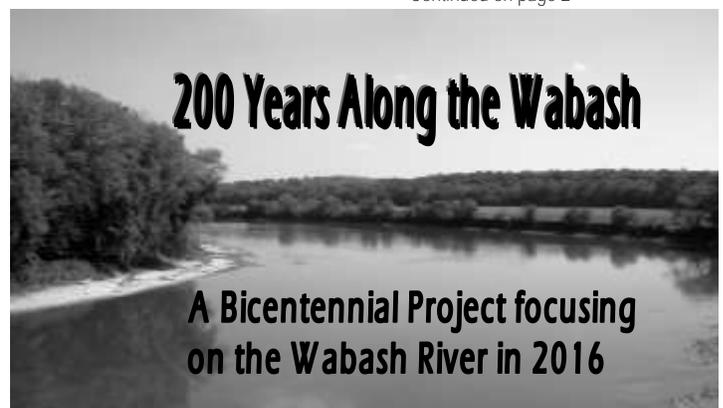
10:45 a.m. Outline the Idea for 200 Years Along the Wabash and envision how it will work. Plans include having a website for listing all the events which can be sorted by areas and dates.

11:00 a.m. Ideas and brainstorming from individuals and groups. Ideally people will come with some ideas in advance of what events could be included from their community/area or ideas for possibilities elsewhere, as well as names and contact information for groups and individuals in their area who could be sent information on this project. Ideas for local events can include those that already happen in your community or ideas for a special project in honor of the bicentennial. Once ideas start to flow, it's amazing how many others follow. BOW will collect the list of ideas and suggestions from the

Continued on page 2

**YOUR IDEAS ARE
NEEDED!**

If you can attend
**the meeting that's
great.** If not send
your ideas via
**email to BOW's
secretary at
sueandtedulrich@
msn.com**



*Banks of the
Wabash
Board of Directors*

- Bernie Dahl
President
- Rae Schnapp
V-president
- Bob Shepherd
Treasurer
- Susan Ulrich
Secretary
- Ken Einselen
- Jack Fenoglio
- John Gettinger
- Dan Goen
- Nick Harby
- Tom Knapke
- Cec Schneider

Remember BOW is now accepting Mini-Grants for 2014

So far one application has been received for a BOW Mini Grant. To apply for one yourself, use the application in the last newsletter or email the editor at sueandtedulrich@msn.com and she can email you a copy. **BOW's board isn't fussy**—a simple one page sheet

works if the idea is a good one and the board feels the project is viable. Start thinking about ideas for potential projects for 2016 too. Any that can be included in the *200 Years Along the Wabash* will be given preference, all other things being equal.

Annual Meeting continued from page 1:

meeting and send the list via email to the various people present. If **you can't make the meeting, send your ideas by email to the secretary** at sueandtedulrich@msn.com. We will include them on the list and send you a copy of all of those proposed.

12 noon. Lunch break & 2013 Mini-grant Recipient Reports.

Followed by a short business meeting including the election of board members.

Upcoming DeTrash the Wabash Events



Lafayette: The Lafayette DeTrash is April 19th with May 10th as the rain date. People interested in participating should meet at 9 a.m. at Riverside Skate Park in Tapawingo Park, West Lafayette to register and be assigned to an area. Wabash Landing Garage is providing free parking for volunteers. The clean up is followed by a Pizza Party at noon. If you have any questions, contact Rae Schnapp, the River Keeper at 765-714-4829 .



Peru: The Peru DeTrash, sponsored by the Peru Utilities Company, is April 26th. It starts at 9 and goes to noon. Participants will meet at the Peru Wastewater Treatment Plant at 221 West Riverside. Snacks and drinks are provided. Participants are encouraged to register in advance if possible so the organizers will have an idea of how many people to plan for. Call 765-473-7651 to register.

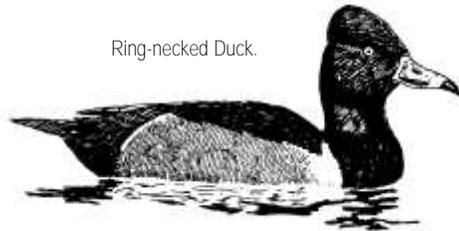
If your group or county is planning a detrash event for later this year, please send us details for inclusion in the July newsletter.

Support
the
Riverkeeper

Remember that you
can make a
donation to Banks
of the Wabash
specifically to help
fund the
Riverkeeper. A
donation line can
be found on
BOW's membership
form on the
back page of

A River for the Birds

Thousands of people enjoy experiences on and by the Wabash River each year— some looking at it as they drive by, others by boating on the river, or fishing, hunting, or walking along its banks. More and more towns are including the Wabash as part of their local recreation plans, by establishing waterfront parks and preserves. But people aren't the only ones that use and enjoy our state's major river. Each year hundreds of thousands of birds follow the Wabash River on migration from south to north in spring and then from north to south in the fall.



Ring-necked Duck.

Spring migration is especially impressive as birds are anxious to move north to their

breeding grounds and appear in large numbers as soon as conditions are favorable. The numbers can be astonishing. One of the earliest groups moving north in Spring are the geese. They start north as soon as the ice melts as do some ducks, loons, cranes, and other waterfowl. If there is a cold snap and ice reforms, you may see flocks heading back south temporarily. Usually the main movement of ducks follows that of the geese by a couple of weeks, and both precede the main movement of shorebirds by several more weeks. The flooded bottomlands make wonderful foraging stops for all these species.

March 10th of this year, a birdwatcher decided to explore the Wabash River floodplain in Fountain County. He drove 30 miles of road. Those thirty miles took him 6.5 hours to drive because of all the birds he encountered. He



Canada Geese

totaled over 27,000 waterfowl of 18 species and had 63 species of birds overall. Geese dominated. The most common species encountered was Snow Geese with a total of 15,053. They were followed by 10,752 Canada Geese, 1,474 Greater White-fronted Geese, 11 Ross's Geese, and 1 Cackling Goose.

If every mile along the river had been checked on March 10th, *how many geese would have been counted?*

A few weeks later another birdwatchers had over 2,000 ducks, about half being Lesser Scaup, in a one acre flooded area a few miles west of West Lafayette. Again, just a small sampling of the ducks taking a migration break along the Wabash.



Common Loon

The Wabash also serves as a migration corridor for numerous other species from drab sparrows to brightly colored warblers. The second weekend in May is usually the best time to find the maximum number of bird species in Indiana. The Indiana Audubon Society coordinates a statewide spring bird count based on county boundaries that day, as do bird organizations in other states. The cumulative data from



Lesser Yellowlegs

these hundreds of counts provides invaluable information on how the various bird species are doing and

which ones are increasing, holding their own, or, sadly, **decreasing. This is one of the major "Citizen Science" projects held each year and requires thousands of people. Anyone wishing to take part can check www.indianaudubon.org to see if there is a count in their local county or one**

Interested in joining the Banks Board?
Contact president Bernie Dahl at bdahl@purdue.edu or berniedahl@comcast.net,
or drop a note to the BOW PO box. Now is the perfect time to indicate your interest as elections to the Board are held at the annual meeting in April. Skype attendance at meetings may be possible.



Yellow-throated Warbler.
Nests & feeds almost exclusively in Sycamore— Trees which are found along the Wabash and other waterways

**Banks of the
Wabash's 2014
Meeting Dates**

Please join us. Meetings usually start at 10 a.m.

June 18 Attica

For details on meeting site locations and possible carpooling, contact Bernie Dahl (p. 2) or another board member.

Wabash River Steamboat Plans

Dan Goen, a BOW board member, recently met with the Montezuma Indiana Town Council and presented them with his plans for the steamboat he intends to build, the *Mary Grace*. Dan would like Montezuma to be her home port. The board was very receptive to the idea. Dan is now

building a model of the boat to present at the Town Council's next meeting. Dan is also working on a wharf boat to use for docking the *Mary Grace*. Anyone interested in knowing more about his project or helping Dan make it a reality can reach him by phone at 317-281-1143.

Photos Wanted

Every issue of this newsletter uses pictures taken along the Wabash River and at Wabash River Events and festivals. You'll notice from the captions that most of the photos were taken by Ron James who traveled up and down the river. Ron died of cancer some years back but the pictures he took of his beloved river continue on. If you have camera take time to snap some pictures of the river or events where you live and email them to the editor, sueandtedulrich@msn.com. We'd like photos from every county along the length of the river for the 200 years *Along the Wabash* bicentennial website, and can also use photos for the Banks of the Wabash website as well as this newsletter.

Please label your photos so we know what county they are from as well as what feature or event is pictured. Photographers will be credited whenever the pictures are used. Thank you.

A Bit of River History



The Wabash near its confluence with the Ohio
—photo by Ron James

The first mapping of the Wabash was done by French explorers and extended down to the Mississippi, including sections now known as the Ohio River. Although today the Wabash is considered a tributary of the Ohio, until the mid-18th century the Ohio was considered a tributary of the Wabash. This is because the French traders traveled north and south from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico via the Wabash and Mississippi. It served as a vital trade route for North American-French trade.

How is the Wabash similar to Poetry?

George Kalamaras

George Kalamaras, Poet Laureate of Indiana, is Professor of English at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, a post he has held since 1990. Among his degrees, he holds a Doctorate in English from the State University of New York at Albany and a Master's in English from Colorado State University. He was born in Chicago and grew up in Cedar Lake, in Lake County. The following is from his website.

The Wabash River is a central image in the mythos of our great state. As a river it has always intrigued me, in part because it flows freely for a great distance (411 miles before being dammed in Huntington), forms a border with one of our neighboring states (Illinois), and then flows into the Ohio River, draining into yet another border with Kentucky. By virtue of flowing into the Ohio, it also connects us to the state that shares a name with that river.



Wabash River near Hanging Rock—Photo by Ron James

Rivers have always intrigued me, in part because they mirror the intricate, interconnected **movements of our world. As a poet, I can't resist the** Wabash as a metaphor of free-flowing power and connection—a connection that lends individuality to Indiana by also acting as a border. What a lovely image—Indiana as its own space, yet connected to others by what flows freely.

Poetry is like that. It grants individual identity, allowing an expression of emotions, ideas, and insights, yet it is never content to remain isolated. The poem, as former United States Poet Laureate, Stanley Kunitz, once said, is always in search of an **audience in order to "complete" itself. As poets, we** seek connection through words, even if they seem to arise in privacy and isolation.

Rivers are rarely complete in themselves. They feed something larger and—just as significantly—*are fed by many tributaries*. So it is with the Wabash. We have a rich tradition of Indiana poetry, and (equally important) it would behoove us to remain open to poetry that expands and builds upon that tradition in innovative ways.

So, the Wabash is fed by many tributaries. So it is with poetry and poets. It is the small, seemingly invisible, currents that form something larger. We are all part of something much larger than the individual could ever be. As **"tributaries" we feed that "something larger,"** and in the process *become* it, flowing into it. If we are the Eel River, as just one example, we maintain that individual identity, yet we flow into the Wabash, contributing to a great movement no individual could ever achieve alone. **I'd like to see this image as one of the hallmarks of my laureateship. I am, indeed, greatly honored with the faith my colleagues have placed in me to appoint me to this esteemed position. However, poetry is not about individual accolades. Poetry should be about connection to culture, history, family, even strangers—as well as to the larger order of our cosmos: animals, plants, and rocks.**

Missing newsletters?

If your address changes please let **us know as the post office doesn't** forward mail for very long and this publication only comes out every three months. **If your** change occurs shortly after the last issue, we will get the next one returned and have no way of knowing your new address.



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Banks of the Wabash Inc.
PO Box 1253
Lafayette IN 47902-1253
www.banks of the wabash.net

BOW Membership & Renewal Form 2014-2015

Memberships in Banks of the Wabash **run to BOW's Annual Meeting in April**. Memberships given in one year are good through the April meeting of the following year. BOW's Membership categories are below. If you wish your membership credited to one of the chapters that have formed, please check the appropriate box. *Thank you* for supporting the Wabash!

Membership Categories:

- | | | | | | |
|--|------|---------------------------------------|------|--------------------------------------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student | \$10 | <input type="checkbox"/> Town | \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Trailblazer | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Business | \$35 | <input type="checkbox"/> Discoverer | \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family/Non-profit | \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Wabash Scout | \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Visionary | \$500 |
| | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate | \$500 |

Special Donation for the

Riverkeeper _____

List me as a member of :

- Wabash & Erie Towpath
 Sullivan Chapter

Name _____

Address _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

County _____ Phone _____

Email _____ Cell phone _____

Membership & Inquiries should be sent to Banks of the Wabash, Inc. PO Box 1253, Lafayette IN 47902-1253