



# Newsletter

## American Sternwheel Association

P.O. Box 1482, Charleston, WV 25325 ~ [americansternwheel.org](http://americansternwheel.org)

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## The RUTH MARIE ~ A Father's Legacy

Karl Reichert of Minneapolis, MN, made his father's dream his own when he took over the build of the late patriarch's sternwheel houseboat, the RUTH MARIE. Karl's father, Donn, had always been fond of life on the water – he'd owned a couple of sailboats and loved sailing – but his wife, Ruth, didn't quite share in his enthusiasm. So, upon retirement, Donn decided he would turn his focus to river houseboating, hoping to explore the Mississippi and Ohio rivers with Ruth on a more comfortable style of watercraft. He also chose to make his beloved wife the namesake of his creation.



The RUTH MARIE in the Reichert family machine shop.

Donn used his machine shop on the family farm to construct the hull, which is 37' long x 12' wide, and began welding in 2003, using his knowledge of engineering to calculate water displacement. He meticulously notated the weight of every section of steel, and within a year, had the entire hull constructed; an impressive feat for a 68-year-old man undergoing treatment for prostate cancer. Donn also started mapping out the maiden voyage that would carry he and Ruth down the Mississippi River to Cairo, IL, and then up the Ohio River.

In the years that followed, Donn would install the diesel engine, fuel tank, and drivetrain, and he built out the first floor which included the galley and bathroom. While work progressed, life "happened" (as it always does), and Donn was eventually drawn back into the family business. Additionally, he took on the role of caregiver as Ruth faced surgery and chemotherapy for colon cancer in 2011.

**Story Continued on Page 3**

## ASA Officers

**Capt. Dana DeMent**  
*President*

**Capt. Bryan Hughes**  
*1<sup>st</sup> Vice President*

**Capt. Butch LePort**  
*2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President*

**Capt. Tom Cook**  
*Treasurer*  
*Budget & Finance*  
*Membership*

**Debbie Lucik**  
*Secretary*

**Stephanie Burden**  
*Ways & Means*

**Capt. Jim Kranz**  
*Webmaster*

**Capt. Rick Burden**  
*Steering*

**Kristina Price**  
*Editor*

## Don't Forget to Mark Your Calendar!

- **May 18, 2024** **ASA Meeting @ Point Pleasant River Museum**  
ADDRESS: 28 Main St., Point Pleasant, WV  
-- *Trustee Meeting at 2 p.m.* --  
-- *General Meeting at 3 p.m.* --
- **July 3-7, 2024** **Charleston Sternwheel Regatta**  
Charleston, WV (Kanawha River, Mile Marker 58.4)
- **July 6, 2024** **ASA Meeting @ Four Points by Sheraton Hotel**  
ADDRESS: 600 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV  
**During Regatta - \*Time TBD**
- **July 19-21, 2024** **Augusta Riverfest Days**  
Augusta, KY (Ohio River, Mile Marker 426.5)
- **July 26-27, 2024** **Elizabeth Firemen's Riverfest**  
Monongahela River (Mile Marker 23.8)
- **Aug. 30-31, 2024** **Tribute to the River**  
Point Pleasant, WV (Ohio River, Mile Marker 265.5)
- **Sept. 6-8, 2024** **Ohio River Sternwheel Festival**  
Marietta, OH (Ohio River, Mile Marker 172)
- **Sept. 7, 2024** **ASA Meeting @ Lafayette Hotel**  
Regatta Weekend, Marietta, OH  
-- *Trustee Meeting at 1 p.m.* --  
-- *General Meeting at 2 p.m.* --
- **Sept. 13-14, 2024** **Parkersburg Riverfest**  
Parkersburg, WV (Ohio River, Mile Marker 184.6)
- **Sept. 19-22, 2024** **Pomeroy Sternwheel Regatta**  
Pomeroy, OH (Ohio River, Mile Marker 250)

*If you are having a river event, and would like to be included in our calendar, please notify our Editor directly at [editor@americansternwheel.org](mailto:editor@americansternwheel.org).*



## NEW MEMBERS

**Gregory Joy**  
*of Salt Lake City, UT*

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**Don Prater**  
*of Ashland, KY*

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**Marshall Whitmer**  
*of Loranger, LA*

## ... A Father's Legacy (continued from cover page)

While Donn's momentum for the project may have been put on pause, his desire to get the RUTH MARIE on the river never waned. It was during Donn's final months (at the height of the COVID pandemic), that Karl had the privilege of moving home to help his mother tend to his father. Mother and son spent many hours at the kitchen table talking about the boat, and those conversations became pivotal for Karl after his father's passing in 2021, inspiring him to carry out his father's legacy.

Karl, and his husband, Reynaldo, share a combined determination to finish the RUTH MARIE and make it a special home on the water. Rather than investing in a lake cabin or second residence, the boat will eventually become a place to spend time gathering with friends and family on the Mississippi, while being close to their condo in downtown Minneapolis. With space being a precious commodity on the vessel, the couple is trying to create a place of joy for those that come aboard, but also striving to maintain some ease of operation and modern-day convenience.

When Donn was creating the boat 20 years ago, everyone was young and nimble, so focusing on a staircase and railing, rather than a ladder to the second floor, will be a much better design for the couple when they approach their golden years.



**AT LEFT:**

*Karl's father, Donn Reichert, stands at the helm of his timeless creation.*

*Story details and photos were obtained from [karlreichert.substack.com](http://karlreichert.substack.com); you can join online to follow the boat's progression.*

The addition of a staircase will also ensure necessary accessibility for visits from the couple's mothers, Ruth and Giannina, as well as other passengers onboard.

As Karl continues working on the RUTH MARIE, he can't help but marvel at his father's ingenuity and tenacity. He feels blessed to have witnessed the masterful work – the very foundation – that one man dreamed to life.

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## HEAVY RAINS DELIVER TROUBLE TO RIVERS FOR WEEKS



ABOVE: Wheeling Island in West Virginia

\*Photo credit belongs to **Davis Aerial Insight**.

We all know "April showers bring May flowers", but for the surrounding area, heavy rains brought rising water levels and flooding. The Point in Pittsburgh crested on April 4<sup>th</sup> at 28.37'; the last time it faced such a rise was March 12, 2011 at 26.65'. Further south, the Ohio River spilled over banks and onto roads in cities like Wheeling & Charleston in West Virginia, and Marietta & Pomeroy in Ohio. Sadly, the rainfall and storms affected roadways, vehicles, homes and businesses. On April 12<sup>th</sup>, more than two dozen barges broke loose on the Allegheny and floated down the Ohio with five going through the Emsworth Dam and four going over the Dashields Dam. One marina suffered extensive damage, and many docks are now in need of repair.



AT RIGHT: Marietta, Ohio

\*Photo credit belongs to **Marietta College**.

For those that do not work or live, on or near a river, it is hard to imagine the devastation severe rainfall can inflict. Flooding, as well as erosion due to fast moving water, is a very real threat that can result in not only evacuations, but loss of personal property, sources of income, and even lives. River flooding is the 3rd costliest natural disaster and should always be taken seriously. To all of our readers far and wide, please stay safe out there!



# American Sternwheel Association **WAYS & MEANS** Section

by Stephanie Burden

## ◇ Merchandise

We are currently working with a new company in regard to our merchandise, and a new T-shirt design is in the works for Regatta season.

Also, our booth during the regattas will be featuring less items this year, as the wide variety of products offered was becoming overwhelming and confusing. The change should make for a more streamlined shopping experience for customers, as well as our tent volunteers.

We will continue to take orders year-round, and you can always use a credit card with our **Square** application.

## ◇ Sale Items

Take advantage of our **SALE** as older items are currently discounted!

Regular ASA T-Shirt	\$17
Long Sleeve Shirt	\$24
Quarter-Zip Sweatshirt	\$32
Hooded Sweatshirt	\$40
Denim Shirt	\$40
Baseball Hat	\$20
Rain Jacket (Special Order Item)	\$70
ASA Flags	\$55
Welcome Sign	\$45
Holiday Ornament	\$15
Wrapping Paper	\$15

<b>HALF-OFF SALE ITEMS</b>	
Ringer/Varsity Shirt	<b>\$10.00</b>
Ragland/Baseball ¾ Sleeve Shirt	<b>\$11.00</b>
Men's Camp/Bowling Shirt	<b>\$22.50</b>
Men's Polo Shirt	<b>\$16.00</b>
Women's Gray Button-Up Shirt	<b>\$20.00</b>
Ragland ¾-Sleeve (2022 Style)	<b>\$11.00</b>
Regular T-Shirt (2022 Style)	<b>\$8.50</b>
Sternwheel Bling T-Shirt	<b>\$12.50</b>
Sternwheel Bling Long Sleeve Shirt	<b>\$15.00</b>
<b>*Most sale items offered are in smaller sizes.</b>	

To place an order, contact Stephanie Burden at [brightideaacres@gmail.com](mailto:brightideaacres@gmail.com) or text to 740-403-1017;  
or contact Debbie Burden at [myjennyb@windstream.net](mailto:myjennyb@windstream.net) or text to 740-404-1387.

## **2024 Augusta Riverfest Days – July 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>**

Janet Hunt, the Tourism Director for the City of Augusta, KY, attended the March ASA Meeting to cordially invite our sternwheelers to this summer's Riverfest Days. She was there to answer questions and speak about the event, and some key elements from the discussion included the following:

- A special meal is planned for captains on Saturday, July 20<sup>th</sup>.
- A breakfast is also in the works for boaters to attend that weekend.
- For preparation efforts, boaters will need to send in a completed Boat Attendance Registration Form by July 5<sup>th</sup>. (If you want an electronic copy sent to you, please email our Editor, Kristina Price at [editor@americansternwheel.org](mailto:editor@americansternwheel.org).)
- There are quaint shops, fine dining, museums, distilleries and wineries to explore while in the area, and reservations in advance are encouraged for their most popular restaurant – the Beehive Augusta Tavern – which features beautiful river views and farm-to-table dining.
- You can watch for updates by following their Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/augustakentucky](https://www.facebook.com/augustakentucky) or visiting their new website at [www.AugustaKy.gov](http://www.AugustaKy.gov).



# Not Your Usual Moving Day

*by Captain Steve Folmar*

The relocation of the floating house from Rayland, OH, to Glen Dale, WV, was an exciting endeavor. A whole lot of planning and preparation went into the project. There were many conversations with experienced captains, including ASA members Captain Bill Price and Captain Rick Burden. My advice to anyone speaking with seasoned pilots would be this: Be sure to listen and soak up every bit of knowledge offered.

To pull off the transfer of the house, we had a total of four vessels assisting: the Sternwheeler LADY CARMINA piloted by myself, the Sternwheeler SHAYLA ELIZABETH piloted by Captain Wil Windsheimer, and two smaller aluminum boats with outboards. There was much dialogue on how to rig the sternwheel boats to the house, and eventually it was decided the best configuration was to tie the boats together and center them across the back of the house. This arrangement offered the most control ... however, there was no visibility for the captains to see what was in front of them. So, in order to remedy that situation, four cameras were used to provide live video feed to both pilothouses, along with GPS and AIS. Additionally, crewmembers were outfitted with headsets, and stationed at the front of the house as "spotters".



*Moving south on the Ohio River.*



*Crew photo to memorialize the trip.*

The morning of the move was cold with temperatures in the low 20s, and we found some of our lines were frozen making them difficult to manipulate. We also experienced some ice buildup on the stern of the boats from wheel spray. It gradually warmed throughout the day, and as the temperature rose, these issues thankfully subsided. And even though temps were chilly, the winds were actually favorable with predictions of a light breeze and minimal gusts.

Entering the big chamber at Pike Island was an intentionally slow and careful approach. The smaller outboard boats were used to keep the approach on point by providing nudges as needed. All went well from a maneuvering standpoint, and our expert crew was able to get lines on a floating pin with no issue.

Once out of the chamber, the remainder of the trip continued as planned. We made good time traveling at around 5mph with no struggle. I was surprised at how well we were able to push the house. We took our time and made the 17-mile journey, navigating the one lock at Pike Island, all in less than six hours total.

And speaking of timing, this trip definitely had a timetable because the move itself was dependent upon the schedule of the company that was setting new pilings to hold the house in position. Ideally, we wanted to be in our location one week prior to the company's arrival to avoid being vulnerable to high water and winds. Now, we did accomplish our goal and were able to arrive on time, but shortly thereafter, Mother Nature surprised us with record rainfall, winds and flooding. Thankfully we were capable of riding out the high water with the existing pilings, but it was certainly not a comfortable ride.

As you can see at right, the top photo shows the river flooded, prior to the poles being set for the house and debris wall. The bottom photo shows the river 4' above normal pool with the poles set in place for the dock, house and debris wall. Three poles were set to hold the floating house and three additional poles were set to hold a debris wall we are in the process of having put in place. Altogether, 60' of dock was added to the already placed 80' of dock. The poles were set by Marion Hill on April 9<sup>th</sup> by an amazing crew.

Thanks to our incredible team we managed a move that was anything but typical!



*All photo credits belong to: Dave Schmelick of Ohio Valley Sound & Picture and the Folmars of the Lady Carmina.*

# The Story Behind the Name



The **GRACIE L** was owned by Captain Donald & Grace Burden along with their three sons, Rick, Bob and Darryl, and their grandchildren.

The sternwheeler's name may have been inspired by Don's wife, Grace, but it was actually the captain himself who stirred up all the excitement. You see, Don sat along the banks of the river watching boats go by, *years before* he ever dreamt of building one and standing at the helm. And over time, as his love of boats grew, it became infectious; becoming the catalyst for the Burdens getting involved with sternwheel boats. It was also the inspiration for the family to build several more sternwheelers over the years.

The **GRACIE L** was eventually sold and became known as the **MICHAEL J** for a short time. Sold again, the vessel would then become what is now well known on the sternwheel circuit as the **FRANKY D**. (As for stories behind those specific names, I guess we'll wait and see if they are revealed in a future newsletter!)

## 2023 MILEAGE CONTEST WINNERS!

At the March ASA Meeting, winners of the 2023 Mileage Contest were announced, congratulated, and given framed certificates and medals for their participation.

First Place was awarded to Captain Rick Burden of the **JENNY B** with a total of 1569.2 miles; Second Place went to Captain Steve Price and Captain Bill Price of the **LAUREN ELIZABETH** with 996 miles; and Third Place was Captain Roger Giles of the **JOSEPH M. LABARGE** with 472 miles.

And all in good fun, the sternwheeler with the *lowest* reported miles was awarded to Captain Jack Jarrett of the **LIDA ANN**. They traveled 6 whole miles!

Members in attendance at the meeting voted to continue the contest in 2024, and proposed a committee be formed to better define rules and guidelines. To participate in this year's competition, contact Stephanie Burden at [brightideaacres@gmail.com](mailto:brightideaacres@gmail.com) to receive a mileage form.



Winners in attendance, pictured left to right: Capt. Bill Price and Capt. Steve Price of the **LAUREN ELIZABETH**, and Capt. Rick Burden of the **JENNY B**





# Let Me Introduce Myself

Hey there, sternwheel crowd! My name's Bocephus, but I'm more well-known by either of my nicknames, Bo or BoBo. I'm a 4-year-old male and I belong to Rebecca Patterson. Becca's the daughter of Captain Brian and Sheila Patterson, so you'll find me aboard the NEMACOLIN.

I'm a full-blooded chocolate Labrador Retriever and some of my favorite things to do are play with my yellow chicken and fetch my frisbee. I also love to swim. You see, labs are known for their love of water, so I make a great boat voyager/extra deckhand. And speaking of life as a passenger, I'll NEVER turn down a ride in the car, EVER!

My absolute favorite treat has got to be peanut butter DreamBones. If anyone ever hears about a contest to win those things for life, please let me know! Another all-time favorite of mine is actually a mouthwatering human food. Yeah, you probably guessed it by now – it's chicken nuggets. I will fill my belly with as many of those tasty morsels as I can get my paws on.

Personality-wise, my family will tell you I'm extremely loving. Like, I am always down for a hug anytime, anywhere. They also will say I'm a big baby, but I'll admit to that. Seriously, what furry guy wouldn't love to be fussed over?

In addition to being a baby, I am also a huge scaredy pup. I just hope this is a judge-free zone, because I'm ashamed to admit my biggest fears: (1) I don't like anything super loud; and (2) I am afraid of my cat sister. I truly apologize to all my fellow canines out there, I know I shouldn't fear an insignificant feline, but you don't live with her! She can be extra scary, I promise you.



As for my energy level, it's in the medium to high range. I like to explore, and keep active and healthy. But when I'm tired, I'm done, and that's when I become a snorer and a bed hog – or so I've been told. (But hey, if there is no video evidence, that equals zero proof in my book.)

I've never really given any thought to a celebrity lookalike, but after some research, I think I *might* resemble actress Anne Hathaway's chocolate lab, Esmeralda. But I'm much cuter, of course. Just look at my Snapchat pic on the left with my hearts ... HELLOOOO, I can't help it that I'm so handsome!

Well, this has been a good time, and I hope to see you all on the river real soon!



If you'd like to see your pet in our feature, please email our editor, at [editor@americansternwheel.org](mailto:editor@americansternwheel.org).



# Meeting Minutes for American Sternwheel Association

## GENERAL MEETING

**Date:** January 13, 2024

**Location:** Lafayette Hotel, Marietta, OH

**General Membership Meeting Called to Order:** Capt. Dana DeMent, President, at 3:00 PM

### Minutes

-- Motion made and accepted to defer the actual reading of the minutes. The reading was deferred to individual, personal reading due to time conservation.

**Treasurer's Report:** Capt. Tom Cook submitted the Treasurer's Report.

-- Motion made and accepted.

### Committee Reports

**\*Budget & Finance:** Capt. Tom Cook reviewed the Budget & Finance Report.

-- Motion made and accepted. The Trustees approved the 2024 Budget.

**\*Membership:** Capt. Tom Cook reported there are currently 301 members in 23 states; 179 primary members and 122 secondary members. New member in attendance was Wade Christianson.

**\*Steering Committee:** Capt. Rick Burden, no steering issues, no complaints.

**\*Magazine & Newsletter:** Editor, Kristina Price, new stories and features continue to be needed, such as projects, pet features, boat names and how names were chosen.

**\*Website Report:** Capt. Jim Kranz, site is not yet online, but should be back up and running this week. The magazine and recipes have not been updated.

**\*Directory & Other Projects:** Stephanie Burden will be taking a break from the Boat Directory project, but everything that is current will be available online on the member's portion of the ASA website. Updates can be sent to personal emails or brought in with no holes punched. Follow up with Stephanie.

**\*Ways & Means:** Stephanie Burden is working with a new company and creating a new shirt design for 2024, with plans to finish by the end of February. Zip-up sweatshirts will be added. Capt. Steve Price is evaluating leather patches for hats. Several older items from the booth sales are discounted. In the future, not as many items will be sold at the booth as the wide variety was becoming confusing. C.R. Neale is taking over the "Adopt A Boat" project in Marietta. Merchandise: flannel shirts and pens, women's button shirts \$40, gingham button shirts \$45, hats \$20, wheel shirts \$25, crew or long-sleeve shirts \$30. Remaining from a previous sale, boat wheel wrapping paper \$15 per roll. New special-order products are sternwheel signs/welcome signs \$45 (composition, white board, not suitable for outdoors). Wheel ornaments \$15, wood colored.

### **Highest Mileage Traveled Contest – 2023**

Certificates will be awarded at the March Meeting. Capt. Jack & Kathy Bedeck were not present to participate. The unconfirmed mileage was reported, but needs final verification. This year, only eight boats reported mileage, among them were the JENNY B with 1569.2 miles; the LAUREN ELIZABETH with 996 miles; the PEARL ANN with 600 miles and mileage for last place was the LIDA ANN with 6 miles. Stephanie Burden inquired if the captains wished to continue this contest for 2024 which led to a good discussion. The contest will continue, but a committee will be formed to define rules and guidelines. The suggested Mileage Content Committee members were: Capt. Bill Price, Capt. Bryan Hughes, Capt. Rick Burden, and new member Wade Christianson. Jim Kranz suggested the first and second vice presidents be involved, too. Discussion to be continued at the March meeting.

### **New Business**

A request to host the May 18, 2024 ASA Meeting at the Point Pleasant River Museum was received from Capt. Tom Cook. The motion was made by Capt. Rick Burden, the motion was accepted and passed. A request was made to host the July Meeting in Charleston, WV, during the Regatta, by Capt. Bryan Hughes. A request was also made to change the date of the July Meeting to July 6, 2024, the first Saturday in July versus the second. Capt. Bryan Hughes made the motion, Stephanie Burden seconded and the motion was passed.

### **Old Business**

The ASA plaque is up and displayed inside the Lafayette Hotel. Capt. Bryan Hughes will give updates about the Augusta Regatta at the March Meeting.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 3:37 PM, motion not needed.

### **IT WAS POSTED 10 YEARS AGO ON FACEBOOK ...**

*The MISS LONA was renamed the KANAWHA.*

*The BELLE OF LOUISVILLE was celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> year.*

*Capt. JD Pauley was repairing the HOBBY III's paddlewheel shaft that broke in half.*

*Capt. Roger Giles was fixing a broken sprocket on the wheel of the JOSEPH M LABARGE.*

*Linda Hastings announced Harry, an African grey parrot and longtime crewmember of the PICKET HASTINGS, had died and would be missed by Captain Ike.*

