



## December Tours "Wrapped Up" 2009

December 2009 proved to be a record month for the River Discovery Center with over 900 students enjoying our "Christmas Special". Schools came from a wide area, including southern Illinois, to enjoy the all-day experience. Their visits included a tour of the interactive exhibits with a separate rotation allotted for the navigation simulator. Students also went to the classroom for a special educational presentation. All hands were on deck (museum staff) to accommodate the groups, some as large as 100 students. A special thank you goes out to our many volunteers who were responsible for making it possible. Thanks again to Kelly Azar, Volunteer Co-ordinator (pictured), who was on-hand most days and also helped with arranging our volunteers.

## Acquisitions: The Noble Gordon Collection

The center has been fortunate to receive an extensive collection of photographs, paintings and other memorabilia from the estate of Captain Noble L. Gordon. Capt. Gordon, who died in 2009, was a native of Paducah and directed that his collection be given to the River Discovery Center.

Captain Gordon was one of the founding fathers of the

modern inland maritime industry, having served in numerous capacities from oil tanker wiper up to founder of several towing companies including Mid-America and Mid-South Towing.

Part of his collection will be placed on display immediately with the remainder to be utilized in the planned expansion of the center.



*This steel engraving, by artist Menzo Van Esvelde, shows the steamboat Sprague pushing a tow of 58 barges.*

# Director's Notes!



*Julie Harris,  
Executive Director*

As we begin the new year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our members and supporters for a great 2009! The new year always brings anticipation and excitement and that is certainly true here at the River Discovery Center. Later in February, we will be opening a new interactive exhibit called River Spy! Please plan on coming in to try this new experience!

For the River Discovery Center, 2009 and the decade ended with a blur of nearly 900 children through the doors. We love the sound of lots of kids here, even if it can get a little loud. These kids are little "sponges" (not necessarily a river word) soaking up knowledge about the river!

With the economy's decline over the past year, you just never know what to expect. We have been very fortunate with our huge increases in visitation. This is not a local trend. On the national front, there is a mounting pile of anecdotal evidence for a large rise in attendance at museums. Museums and science centers offer wonderful options for entertainment and learning combined. I think the trend will continue. I think there is a "river" inside of all of us as we all seem to navigate through difficult times and weather many storms.



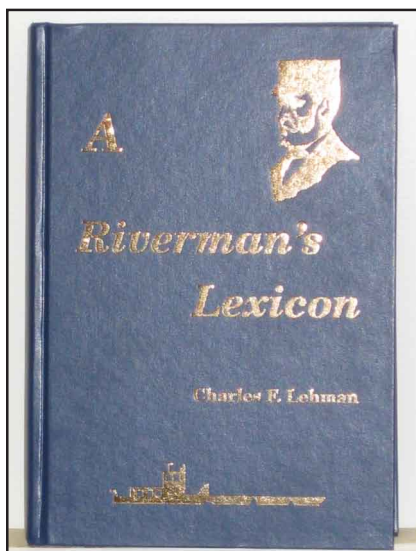
*Left to Right Craig Philip, CEO, Ingram Barge Line, Austin Brindley 5th grade student Farley Elementary, Tina Hayes, 5th grade teacher Farley Elementary and RDC board member*

## AUSTIN BRINDLEY, THE CONSUMMATE ADOPT-A-TOWBOAT STUDENT

Austin Brindley may be only a 5th grader, but he is looking ahead to his adult career. Austin, a student at Farley Elementary School, was recently honored at the River Discovery Center as the guest speaker at the annual Sustainer's Breakfast held in December. Austin was chosen because of his passion for learning about towboats in Tina Hayes's Adopt-a-Towboat program. Tina Hayes, his teacher, shared some of his comments from a letter to his captain and it was quickly realized that Austin epitomizes what the program strives to accomplish. The program's mission is to educate young people about the river and the towboat industry, all the while knowing that many young people will consider making it

their career choice. The students communicate with their "adopted" boat captains and Austin's letter to Captain Kennedy, Ingram Barge Company, exemplifies the relationship that the classrooms develop with their boats and crews. In his letter that he shared with the breakfast guests, Austin read, "How do you use the throttle to make the boat go forward and in reverse?...I thought I might follow in your footsteps. I want to drive a towboat really bad...I am already working on a resume."

Austin's enthusiasm, fostered by teachers like Mrs. Hayes and boat captains like Captain Kennedy, will take towboating into the future with qualified, educated and dedicated crew members navigating the waters.



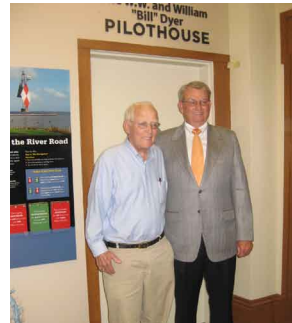
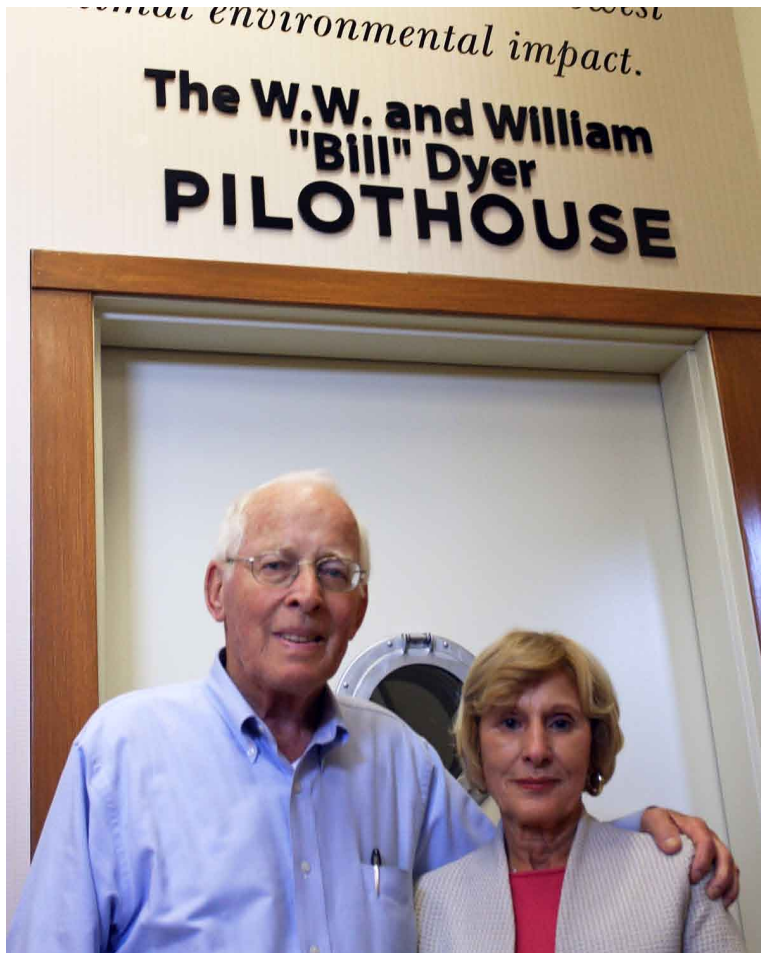
## New in Museum shop:

*Pictured: A Riverman's Lexicon. Written by Charles Lehman, who spent his entire career working in the river industry, this book defines and delves into the history of our Western Rivers, and explains the language, spoken and written, as used by every Riverman from the age of steamboats to modern diesel-powered vessels.*

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# Simulator Named after W.W. Dyer & Bill Dyer



In late September, the River Discovery Center named its pilothouse simulator after two of its most ardent supporters, the late W.W. Dyer and his son, the late Bill Dyer. With a surprise ceremony, Bill and his father were honored for their vision and support of The River Discovery Center. On hand for the ceremony were Bill's wife Mary, Mayor Paxton, Norb Whitlock formerly of ACL and Bill's longtime friend, T.S. Kunsman, his business partner at TVT, along with many other friends and board members. After Alex Edwards, RDC board chair read the proclamation, Bill made several comments, and was humbled at the honor. Also speaking at the event were the mayor, former mayor and board member, Gerry Montgomery and Ken Wheeler. Bill's father, the late W.W. Dyer was the visionary behind Paducah becoming home to a river museum. Through the past 20 years, Bill worked hard towards the museum's growth, and he was very involved in the expansion plans.

*In November, Bill lost his battle with cancer. He will be sorely missed.*

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