



Number 90

www.canalwatch.org

October 2023

GET READY TO CELEBRATE THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE D&R CANAL STATE PARK AND THE D&R CANAL COMMISSION IN 2024

On October 10, 1974, the New Jersey State Legislature approved the creation of the D&R Canal State Park and the D&R Canal Commission.

Throughout next year the park, the commission, and the Canal Watch will celebrate the anniversary with a variety of events. We also hope that you, our readers, will suggest ideas.

Among the ideas for the celebration are:

1. A scavenger hunt run by the park staff.
2. A new mug. We have a design, but need someone to oversee this project: finding a vendor; choosing the size of the mug; ordering them; and overseeing sales.
3. Poetry book: please ask any poets you know to send a canal poem to Penelope Schott at penelopeschott@comcast.net.
4. A speaker series. Please send any suggestions for a speaker and/or a venue to Linda Barth at barthlinda123@aol.com.

The Canal Watch is looking forward to celebrating with the park and the canal commission.

D & R CANAL



175 Years & Counting
1834 - 2009

The 2024 Canal Watch Calendar is ready

The brand new 2024 D&R Canal Watch Calendar is now available. Supplies are limited, so order your copy now.

To purchase a copy, please contact Linda Barth at (908-240-0488)

or at barthlinda123@aol.com.

Provide your phone number and your town and she will call you to arrange for delivery.

12" x 12" -- \$20, with all proceeds going to the D&R Canal Watch to purchase items for the park.



This year marks 50 years since the state legislature created the D&R Canal State Park and the D&R Canal Commission.

It's also the 35th anniversary of the D&R Canal Watch and 190 years since the canal opened in 1834.

This year's full-color calendar features images taken by people who visit the towpath. The photographs show people walking, kayaking, and cycling. We also show two bridgetender's homes, a lock, and an actuator (check the April calendar page to learn what that is.)

(continued on page two)

CALENDAR (from page one)

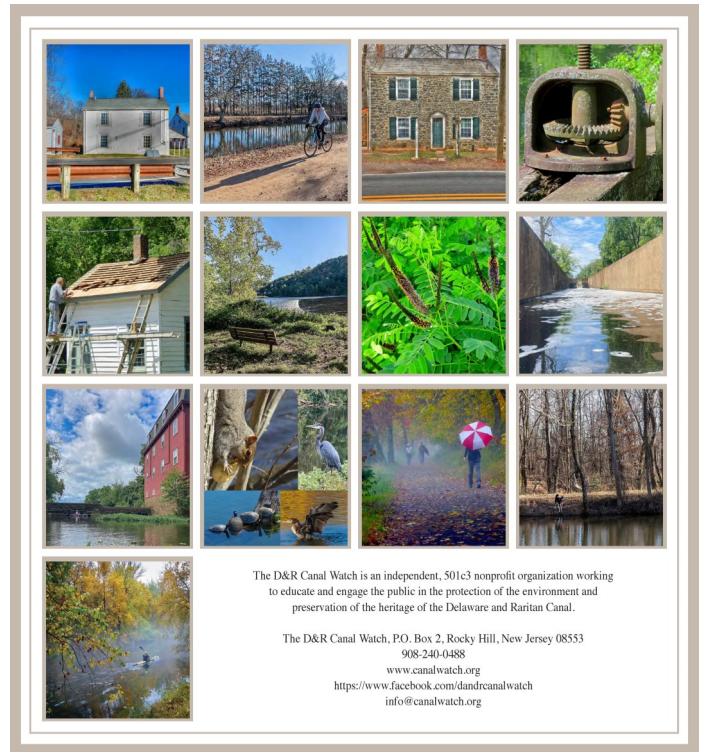
As usual, we have included a map and a history of the D&R Canal.

Featured this year are photographs taken by Robert H. Barth, Tom Egan, Tim Roth, Summer Pramer, and Sandra Shapiro.

CANAL WATCH ACTIVITIES VOLUNTEER

For many years, Bob Barth, Wayne Petko, and Pamela V'Combe have planned and often led walks, bike rides, and nature walks in our park.

It is time to give them a break and have someone new schedule and lead these events. If you can contribute to the Canal Watch by taking the reins of this project, please write to Linda Barth at barhlinda123@aol.com or call at 908-240-0488.



Below are the next activities on our schedule. If you can start planning walks after the January clean-up, please let us know. Thanks so much.

Saturday, November 11: 10:00 a.m. Towpath Walk, Demott Lane to Landing Lane, 4.2 miles round-trip. Meet at the historic Van Wickle House off Easton Avenue at the foot of Demott Lane (GPS 1289 Easton Avenue, Somerset NJ 08873). Leader: Bob Barth, 201-401-3121, bbarth321@aol.com.

Saturday, January 13, 2024: Towpath clean-up. Meet at Lock 11 in South Bound Brook, across from the post office (11 Madison Avenue) on Canal Road. Join members of the Canal Watch in their effort to keep the state park a beauty spot in Central New Jersey. Leader: Bob Barth 201-401-3121; bbarth321@aol.com.



Hey Bikers!

Has your bike ever broken down while you are out riding? If you need help, just contact Brian Clissord, the Bike Guy Mobile! For an immediate problem, text him at 269-274-3883; if he's available, he'll help. To make an appointment for a repair at your home, visit <https://bikeguymobile.com/> and scroll down to "online appointments."



Canal Coalition Saved the Waterway

In 1984, for the 150th anniversary of the opening of the canal, the Packet Publications printed an eight-page insert with many stories of our historic waterway. Below, we include one article about the work of the D&R Canal Coalition.

It could be said, without too much exaggeration, that the Delaware and Raritan Canal Coalition saved the canal.

Back in 1973, the canal was everybody's kicking boy, exploited, abused, allowed to deteriorate. It faced being cut up, piped, and paved over.

But a group of citizens, spurred by the plans of Trap Rock Industries to build a road along the canal bank between Rocky Hill and Kingston, decided to fight for the canal. That fight finally ended in 1974 with the passage of a remarkable piece of state legislation that created the canal state park and a canal commission with unusual powers to control development and drainage, even outside the boundaries of the park.

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Help us celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the D&R Canal State Park and the D&R Canal Commission in 2024

In 1974, most of the Delaware and Raritan Canal was declared a New Jersey state park, which, is used for canoeing, kayaking, cycling, fishing, horseback riding, birding, walking, jogging, and enjoying nature..

P.L. 1974. C 118 -- The "Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park Law of 1974" designated the lands along the canal owned by the State of New Jersey as the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park. The legislation also created the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission, set forth the Commission's powers, functions and duties, established the boundaries of the Commission "Review Zone." The legislation also created the present

D&R Canal Commission land use regulatory program. This concurrent resolution established a special legislative commission to study and develop a plan to protect, preserve and maintain the Delaware and Raritan Canal.

The D&R Canal Watch, a friends group that works with the state park staff, is planning a speaker series, a new book of canal poetry, and a collectible mug for the 2024 celebratory year. If you have any suggestions for other festivities, please send them to Linda Barth at barthlinda123@aol.com.

A graded natural-surface trail along the side of the canal, which was the towpath on which mules used to tow canalboats, is now used for recreation. A series of loop trails, using bridges that cross the Delaware River, connect the D&R with the towpath in Pennsylvania's Delaware Canal State Park. About 36 miles of the main canal, and all 22 miles of the feeder canal, are still used. The park is operated and maintained by the New Jersey Division of Parks and Forestry.

The canal is accessible from many points along its route, with small parking areas providing access at most road crossings. Check the official state park website, www.dandrcanal.com, for a map and access points.

News from the D&R Canal Commission meeting, September 20, 2023

Executive Director's Report

Director Hutchison stated that although the modestly improved fee collections were a relief, the Commission staff would need to remain vigilant with respect to spending until fee revenues come into line with the anticipated appropriation amount. This issue, along with other fiscal matters, will be discussed at the Fiscal Year 2024 quarterly budget meeting which, he stated, would include the DEP Comptroller Stephen Matis and Natural and Historic Resources Operations Chief Madden.

The Director reminded the Commissioners that he cancelled the Commission's purchase order with ACCSES-NJ for the Commission file scanning project. He noted that a large document scanner has been leased from Ricoh for 48 months at a cost of \$322.81/month and will be delivered to the office on September 28.

Director Hutchison reported that a number of Commissioners are not available to attend the November 15 Commission meeting, and the only day a quorum was present within a reasonable time period of that date was Wednesday, November 29. Therefore, staff would reschedule the November meeting for 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, November 29, 2023.

He reported that Commission staff completed draft "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQs) regarding the interaction between the new DEP Inland Flood Protection Rules and the Commission's rules. On the advice of the Office of the Attorney General, staff was waiting to post them to the Commission website, and that this would likely occur once the DEP issued its own guidance with respect to the regulations.

He reported that the third meeting of the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Route 29 Kingwood Rockfall Mitigation Project -- Design Working Group Meeting is scheduled for October 2. He hoped more will be learned about both the Kingwood and Lambertville/Goat Hill projects.

Director Hutchison reported that NJDOT reported several challenges to the Commission with respect to their project to replace the bridge that conveys Washington Road (Mercer County Route No. 571) over the Delaware and Raritan Canal in Princeton/West Windsor Township. These included an unaccounted-for concrete obstruction, which, after consultation with the project's archaeological team, was not significant. He stated that NJDOT also encountered issues with the depth of the existing bulkheads' timber planks, which are used to retain the embankment. Specifically, they terminate at a higher elevation than originally anticipated. As a result, excavating down behind these walls (outside of the canal) for the installation of the new timber façade could result in instabilities of the embankment. The contractor requested that the bottom of the timber façade be raised to reduce risk of destabilization. The contractor requested the façade be terminated 1.0 foot below the canal. The NJDOT proposes terminating the façade 1.5 feet below water at the west side of the canal, and 3.0 feet below water at the east side.

Finally, Director Hutchison reported that a sinkhole developed at Prallsville Mills at the rear of the historic grist mill. He stated that two raceways existed on the site in the 19th century that powered the grist and sawmills. One of these raceways, known as the "tail race," exits the grist mill, turns sharply toward the left and proceeds under the Wickecheoke Creek, the former rail trestle and ultimately to the Delaware River. He reported that Commission staff was alerted to the sinkhole by park patrons. The Commission notified the State Park Service, which in turn placed cones, barrels and tape to cordon off the area. The Commission also provided the Park Service and DEP Office of Resource Development (ORD) with copies of the 1986 Prallsville Master Plan so that those groups were aware of the location of the tail race. Director Hutchison stated that, on Friday, September 22, there would be a meeting with ORD to determine how best to conduct an emergency repair.

Park Superintendent's Report

Commissioner Designee Mark Texel stated that Superintendent Rojewski was unavailable to attend the meeting, and that he would provide her report. Mr. Texel reported that the Big Bear tubing concession has ceased operations in Kingwood Township for the season, and that the Fairview and Cooley Tract parking lots in Kingwood Township had been reopened for public use. He reported that Park Service seasonal staffing had been reduced, and that remaining park staff would continue to support park projects and administrative work, including the installation of signage at the Delaware River parking lot in Frenchtown. He also noted that the Borough had removed picnic tables from the river area, which he hoped would deter unauthorized swimming and general overuse.

Mr. Texel reported that a Delaware River cleanup event was held on September 16, coordinated by the Delaware River Greenway Partnership and park naturalist Stephanie Fox. More than 200 volunteers cleaned up

18 different locations from Frenchtown Borough south to Trenton. Commissioner Designee Texel stated that a sinkhole caused by a collapsed storm sewer pipe was reported in July by a homeowner who lives on Easton Avenue/Main Street in South Bound Brook, adjacent to Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park property. Following assessment of the site conducted by the NJWSA and the State Park Service, it was determined that the pipe in question was not State infrastructure. South Bound Brook Borough subsequently determined it was not municipal infrastructure, and it was likely that the pipe was a drainage feature installed by a property owner without the required permitting. Although not assuming ownership, the State Park Service with the help of NJDOT would commence repairs to the pipe as an emergency measure. He noted that an application to authorize the emergency project would be submitted to the Commission in due course.

Mr. Texel reported that on August 31 a helicopter taking off from Princeton Airport crashed in the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park in the vicinity of Carnegie Lake and Route 27 in the Kingston area of South Brunswick Township. State Park Service staff and the State Park Police supported the response effort by implementing park access closures and by issuing public notifications. On September 2, 2023, access to the park was restored.

He reported that the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park towpath would be closed from September 18 through September 22 in the area of Six Mile Run due to the ongoing NJWSA culvert repair project (See below)

New Jersey Water Supply Authority (NJWSA) Report

Mr. Michael Sellar reported that, in addition to the information Mr. Texel provided regarding the helicopter accident, he went to the scene and observed that a boom had been placed across the Millstone River as a precaution in the event that fuel or other fluids leaked from the aircraft; however, he detected no sheen on the water surface.

Mr. Sellar reported that work was completed, with the exception of some short “punch list” items, on the Landing Lane Spillway rehabilitation project in New Brunswick.

Michael informed the Commission that the project to rehabilitate the stone culvert, which conveys Six Mile Run underneath Canal Road, the Delaware and Raritan Canal, and the towpath in Franklin Township, Somerset County, was underway. The project will involve periodic road and towpath closures, which will be posted on the park website.

Mr. Sellar reported site work had commenced for Phase 1 of the project to repair an approximate 1.0-mile section of the western embankment of the Delaware and Raritan Feeder Canal in Stockton, which separates the canal from the Delaware River, and is generally located between the Prallsville Lock and the railroad bridge crossing over the canal at Brookville in Stockton. He stated that the tarps were removed, tree trimming, tree removal work and vegetation clearing had started, and some embankment repairs were started. The contractor anticipated an early December completion of the Phase 1 project.

Mr. Sellar reported that NJWSA continued to monitor the canal for the presence of the invasive aquatic plant hydrilla. He stated that no hydrilla plants were found during the 2023 season, and that a tuber survey would take place in October.

Mr. Sellar informed the Commission that the contractor for the project to replace 11 canal sluice gates located at four locks in Somerset County had placed the order for the gates and that significant time would be needed to manufacture the devices.

Mr. Sellar stated that NJWSA continued to monitor the Delaware and Raritan Canal and the Millstone River for a blue-green harmful algal bloom (HAB) caused by Cyanobacteria (i.e., Blue-green Algae), which was detected in the Millstone River last summer; however, no bloom had been detected thus far. Mr. Sellar stated that NJWSA staff was addressing the sinkhole associated with a culvert on Easton Avenue (Somerset County Route No. 514) in Franklin Township near the border of that municipality with South Bound Brook Borough. He stated that a repair design and a pre-bid site meeting was scheduled for September 21.

You may take part in the monthly commission meetings either in person or online. Visit www.nj.gov/dep/drc and click on “Meeting Information.” Then click on “Upcoming Meeting Notice.” The D&RCC meets at 10:00 a.m. on the third Wednesday of each month. The public is allowed to comment on the proceedings. In-person meetings have resumed; they are held at Prallsville Mills on Route 29, just north of Stockton Borough.

The coalition's efforts were one of those few truly rare success stories, so much so that its accomplishments pretty much put it out of business.

But in 1983 the coalition returned, and with a vengeance that brings back memories when it was the canal itself that was at stake. This time it was the region and the prospect of overriding development that disturbed the reborn coalition.

The coalition feared that the canal park could become a thin, green thread in a gray expanse of housing and buildings spread like a sheet across Central New Jersey.

The coalition took on a number of projects to extend the green space from the canal, including participation in the national Greenway effort.

Another major project begun was the restoration of the Muletenders barracks in Griggstown. The state leased the building at \$1 per year to the coalition.

The project, planned in cooperation with the Griggstown Historical Society, required \$30,000 in contributions and the coalition began a fundraising effort. The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation promised a \$10,000 grant to the coalition for the establishment of an educational program on the canal, which was tied to local schools. Besides an information area, other parts of the building could be leased to civic or volunteer organizations.

Another effort that got underway was the "Level Walker" program. Level walkers were canal company employees who walked the towpath, looking for problems. Coalition Level Walkers were members who kept watch over assigned sections of the canal. The Level Walkers received patches and I.D. cards and mailed in periodic reports on their particular section.

Battery-operated weed whacker needed for work on the D&R Canal

Dear Canal Friends,

The D&R Canal Watch would like to find a battery-operated, string weed whacker to cut weeds around the many benches along the towpath.

If you have one to donate or lend, please reply to this message. We would be most grateful.

Linda Barth
President, D&R Canal Watch
barthlinda123@aol.com

We thank **Dermot Gately** for his offer to lend a weed whacker to the Wednesday Work Crew and **Barbara ten Broeke** for her offer to bring her weed whacker and take care of some weeds around the benches along the towpath.

If anyone can donate one to the Canal Watch so that we could have our own, we would be very appreciative.



Class of 2020-2023

Theodore Chase (Griggstown)
Tim Roth (Long Valley)
Jeff McVey (Lambertville)
Barbara Ross (Princeton)

Class of 2022-2025

Linda Barth (Somerville)
Robert Barth (Somerville)

Christopher “Kip” Bateman (Branchburg)
Barbara ten Broeke (East Millstone)

Class of 2021-2024

Tom Lederer (Princeton)
Marion Munk (Piscataway)
Wayne Petko (South Bound Brook)
Charles Martin (Franklin Township)

UPCOMING EVENTS YOU MAY WISH TO ATTEND

**Saturday, November 4 -- Mercer County
WASHINGTON CROSSING STATE PARK, NEW JERSEY
Cannon Firing Demonstration!**

Lamb’s Artillery Company (Revolutionary War reenactment group) will conduct Artillery demonstrations from noon to 4:00 p.m. in the field behind the **Visitor Center Museum** at Washington Crossing State Park, Titusville, New Jersey, on Saturday, November 4. The cannon firing demonstrations will be held at 12:00, 1:30, 2:30 & 3:30. This event is co-sponsored by The Swan Historical Foundation Inc.

The Visitor Center Museum can be reached from I-95 by taking the Trenton/Lambertville Exit (this is the first exit in N.J. heading north and the last exit heading south). Head north on Route 29 for 2 ½ miles and turn right at the first traffic light. Park Entrance will be on your left in a ½ mile. Enter the park and follow the signs to the Visitor Center Museum. For more information call (609) 737-0623.



**Wednesday, November 8 -- Mercer County
Fall Lecture Series**

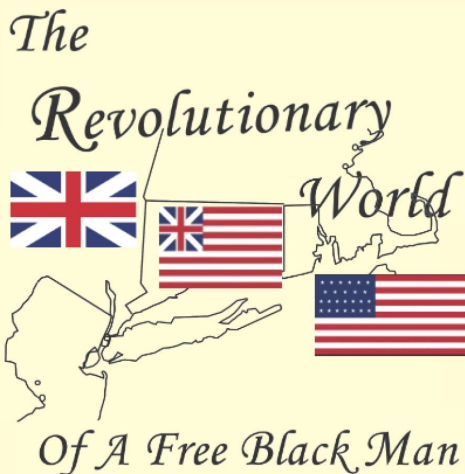
Trenton, NJ—The Old Barracks invites you to spend an evening with highly respected local historians and authors at our Fall Lecture Series to learn about the exciting history that helped shape our state and nation.

Wednesday, November 8th, 6-7:30pm

William L. Kidder -- ***The Revolutionary World of a Free Black Man***
William Kidder will discuss Jacob Francis’s experiences as an indentured servant including his time as a soldier during the American Revolution, and later as a free man raising a family.

Lectures will begin at 6 PM, followed by a Q&A and book signing. Admission is free. Light refreshments will be available.

Copies of these titles are available for purchase in-store or at www.barracks.org. All proceeds go towards supporting the Old Barracks Museum and its mission.



Jacob Francis
1754-1836

William L. Kidder

Canal Watch Calendar of Events

To see our events for 2023, please check page two of this issue.

We have been sending the Canal Watch newsletter by email so that you can read it in **COLOR**. You also have one less item to recycle. If you would like a black-and-white paper copy, please write to Linda Barth at barthlinda123@aol.com and she will mail a printed copy to you.



Fixing the roof on the Kington toll collector's house — Sandra Shapiro
Financial support for this project was provided by the Canal Society of New Jersey

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The D&R Canal Watch
P.O. Box 2
Rocky Hill, New Jersey 08553
908-240-0488

www.canalwatch.org
<https://www.facebook.com/dandrcanalwatch/>
info@canalwatch.org

Our Mission

The D&R Canal Watch is an independent, nonprofit organization working to engage the public in the protection of the environment and preservation of the heritage of the D&R Canal.



The D&R Canal Watch is asking for your support for our activities that protect, maintain, and promote the recreational, historical, aesthetic, and environmental qualities of the Delaware & Raritan Canal State Park. Over the past years, the Canal Watch has:

- **Restored the Kingston canoe/kayak boat launch**
- **Paid for the conditions assessment and the engineering drawings for the East Millstone and Griggstown bridgetender stations.**
- **Working with the park, we posted signage at six locations to help visitors find their way through Trenton.**
- Led history walks along both the main canal and the feeder, pointing out historic structures and Light Rail study tours
- Led history bike rides along the main canal and star-gazing events
- Sponsored bird watching walks along the main canal and bilingual nature walks
- Installed and facilitated canal interpretive signage at locks and spillways
- Activities in 2009 marking the 175th anniversary of the opening of the Delaware and Raritan Canal. These included “Meet the Canal Authors Day” and “The D&R Canal: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow,” by Richard Hunter” walks, bike rides, canoe and kayak rides, “Hands Along the Canal,” and proclamations from our legislature.
- Examination of Lock 9 to determine the feasibility of reopening the lock to navigation
- Post-flood cleaning of canal structures in Griggstown, Zarephath, and East Millstone
- Painting over graffiti in East Millstone
- Repair of shutters on the East Millstone bridgetender’s home
- Straightening and painting of the outhouse at the East Millstone bridgetender’s home
- Staffing the East Millstone bridgetender’s home during the village’s Canalfest in October
- A photographic exhibit of the homes of bridgetenders and locktenders.
- Services of an information technology consultant for the park’s computers
- Funded classes to certify maintenance staff in small motor repair, applying herbicides, etc.
- Contacted legislators and the governor’s office to keep the parks open and retain the commission
- Facilitated the mothballing of an empty bridgetender’s home by buying lumber and painting the windows.
- Installed Kaya-Arms on docks to facilitate entering and exiting kayaks
- Funding the park’s website and continued updating
- Paying the dues for the Meetup site used for announcing park activities
- Sponsored lectures on topics such as “The Role of the Delaware and Raritan Canal in the Growth of Trenton’s Industrial Potteries,” “The Operation of the Joint Companies and the Interrelationship of the canal with the state’s first railroad,” “The Roebling Story,” “Photography Along the Delaware and Raritan Canal

Canal Watch Achievements (continued)

State Park: Treasure in Central New Jersey,” “Meet Ashbel Welch, the second chief engineer of the Delaware and Raritan Canal,” and Jim Amon on how the canal and the park changed during his tenure with the commission.

- Purchased gifts that the park budget could not provide. These include a digital camera, seven picnic tables, several benches, a laptop computer and software, a desktop computer, an LED projector, an inflatable screen for outdoor viewing of videos, a subscription to the Meetup website, a scanner, printer ink, a water testing kit, an external computer drive, lumber for canoe dock at Griggstown, folding tables and twenty chairs for Bulls Island, development of a new park website and maintenance of the site at the rate of \$50 per month, and professional courses for the maintenance staff.

Renew your Membership for 2024

We would like to remind our members to please renew their membership. You can do so online by visiting www.canalwatch.org and clicking on “Join” at the top right.

Please wait a few seconds for the membership form to appear. When you click “Submit,” you will be taken to the payment page. If you prefer to pay by check, please make it payable to D&R Canal Watch and mail it to the Canal Watch at P.O. Box 2, Rocky Hill, New Jersey 08553.



D&R Canal Watch 2024 Membership Renewal Form

Membership year: January 1 to December 31

Nonprofit Org \$10 _____ Individual \$15 _____ Family \$25 _____ Organization \$40 _____
Supporter \$100 _____ Patron \$250 _____ Business member \$500 _____ Benefactor \$1000 _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone(s) _____

Email address _____

Please send this form and your check, payable to the D&R Canal Watch, to D&R Canal Watch, P.O. Box 2, Rocky Hill, New Jersey 08553-0002. Dues can also be paid online at <https://canalwatch.org/join/>

For reasons of fiscal and environmental responsibility, newsletters will be posted on the Canal Watch website, www.canalwatch.org, and emailed to members for whom we have email addresses. If you require a paper copy, please check here _____.

Volunteers are needed to lead walks/trips. Do you have computer, photography, or design skills that you are willing to use for the organization? Would you like to join the Wednesday Work Crew? May we call on you? Yes ___ No ___ Try me ___ (circle your skill)