



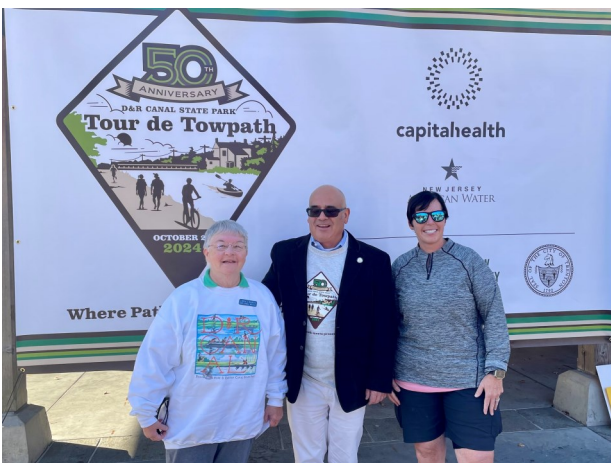
Number 97 [www.canalwatch.org](http://www.canalwatch.org) December 2024



**FIRST ANNUAL TOUR DE TOWPATH A SMASHING SUCCESS!**

**Tour de Towpath**, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the D&R Canal State Park and Canal Commission.

Over 100 bikers, walkers, runners, and volunteers joined us at Trenton’s Cadwalader Park to celebrate “Tour de Towpath,” the finale of the 50th Anniversary of the D&R Canal State Park and the D&R Canal Commission. Most participants took part in the flagship event, a 50-mile bike ride to Somerset County’s Colonial Park



Linda Barth, Mayor Reed Gusciora, and Rebecca Fitzgerald greet the crowd at Cadwalader Park.

and back, or chose the destination of Turning Basin Park in Princeton. Three half-marathoners ran a round trip from Cadwalader to Washington Crossing State Park, following the canal feeder.

The Canal Watch is most grateful to our sponsors: Capital Health, NJ American Water, Sourland Cycles, and the Bateman family. And a big thanks to the City of Trenton and its Department of Parks! And our own Canal State Park!

Sarah Verbeke, Jackie Fay, and Linda Barth smoothly handled the registration for bikers and walkers. While waiting for the start, bicyclists met old friends, compared their bikes, and prepared for the ride. Most had two-wheeled bikes, but several

riders used recumbent trikes.

Thanks to our Canal Watch volunteers: Sarah Verbeke, Bonnye Randolph, Anne and Mike Kruimer, Tom Lederer, and Bob and Linda Barth staffed our table and helped with registration, sales, and serving breakfast.

(continued on the next page)





Bikers cross the pedestrian bridge en route to the starting line.

Nonprofits and other agencies staffed tables, offering free as well as sales items. These included Trenton City Parks, New Jersey American Water, Capital Health, New Jersey Future, New Jersey Conservation Foundation, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, and, of course the D&R Canal Watch.

Before the official start, we were welcomed by Trenton Mayor Reed Gusciora; Rebecca Fitzgerald, state park service administrator; Linda Barth from the Canal Watch; Al

Maghazehe of Capital Health; Brad Fay from the organizing committee, and Eric Epstein, president of Global Impact, the race organizer.

While we awaited the return of the bikers, walkers and runners, we enjoyed the music provided by a local DJ, as well as the breakfast and lunch goodies provided by Global Impact.

All pre-registered volunteers and participants received an event T-shirt.

“As New Jersey’s first linear state park, the D&R Canal State Park has long been a vital link between communities throughout Central Jersey, drawing nearly a million visitors each year,” said Rebecca Fitzgerald, administrator of the State Park Service. “Tour de Towpath is a fitting tribute to the legacy of this unique



Canal Watch treasurer Tom Lederer and volunteer Bonnye Randolph welcome a visitor to the Canal Watch sales booth.

park, allowing participants to explore as much as 50 miles on the park’s beloved tow-path.”

“We’re thrilled to support the Tour de Towpath and help mark an important milestone for the D&R Canal State Park,” said Al Maghazehe, President and CEO of Capital Health. “Capital Health and the D&R Canal are woven into the fabric of our region, and we couldn’t be happier to be part of an event that promotes the health and wellbeing of the communities we serve.”



Bikers and walkers receive instructions from event organizer Eric Epstein of Global Impact.





## 2025 Calendar of Events

The D&R Canal Watch will announce its 2025 events in the next newsletter and by email. In the interim, we have the annual January clean-up. See below.

**Saturday, January 11: 10:00 a.m. South Bound Brook Towpath clean-up.** Meet at Lock 11 in South Bound Brook, across from the post office on Canal Road (11 Madison Street). Join members of the D&R 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](mailto:bbarth321@aol.com).

In addition to the above activity sponsored by the D&R Canal Watch, you can see the D&R Canal State Park programs at this link: <https://dandrcanal.org/programs>



## D&R Canal Watch 50th Anniversary Activities By Bob Barth

We had a busy year celebrating the 50th anniversary of the D&R Canal State Park and the D&R Canal Commission. With our many friends and supporters, 2024 was a banner year on the canal, one that we can be very proud of.

In early January we held our annual Trail Clean-up in South Bound Brook, leaving a good sized pile of trash to take to the dump and recycle.



On January 21, the first big 50th anniversary event was a presentation by our president, Linda Barth, for the **East Millstone Historical Society** at the Millstone Valley Fire Department. Over 50 people squeezed in to learn about the canal's history and assets as a state park.

The **first walk of the anniversary year** went from the Demott Lane Access to Landing Lane to view the newly rebuilt spillway, paid for by the New Jersey Water Supply Authority. A small group of hikers learned about the canal's history and artifacts that remain from the boating years.

Next, in March, Pierre Lacombe led us on a **geology walk**. Starting at Scudder Falls (image below). Pierre, a

retired geologist with the USGS, pointed out the rock formations and the geological history of the area that influenced the siting of the D&R Canal Feeder in its present location. A big turnout of over 25 enthusiasts learned about our canal and geological history.

Early in April we met at the Weston Canal Road Access Site to **walk to East Millstone** and inspect the newly restored bridgetender's station that the Canal Watch helped and pushed to be saved. The bridgetender's house and the stabilized outhouse were opened for inspection.

At the Van Duyn/Van Wickle House on Demott Lane, a group met with Herve and Anne Barrier for a **nature walk**. The leaders



identified birds and plants along the towpath.

A special **canoe/kayak race** was organized by Alan Lamb at the Princeton Turning Basin. Over 30 competitors (see image at left) took part to compete and win bragging rights and a magnet to celebrate the 50th anniversary. Boaters paddled as far as Route 1 before turning around. Landlubbers cheered as the contestants crossed the finish line.

The Canal Watch **annual meeting** was celebrated in the Fellowship Hall of the Griggstown Reformed Church. Renowned



historian and author Captain Bill McKelvey (pictured at left) wowed the audience with an actual slide show illustrating the D&R in its heyday as the second most successful towpath canal, after the famous Erie Canal in New York State. In one year, the D&R moved more cargo than the Erie.

On September 14, the Canal Watch went to the Prallsville Mills Complex to support the **State Park and the Canal Commission for its anniversary celebration**. We staffed a table with our canal information and sales items, including t-shirts, sweatshirts, anniversary mugs (pictured at right, magnets, poetry books, and our 2025 calendar with photographs taken by park users.



For the first time the Watch coordinated the **Five Canal House Challenge**, working with our nonprofit partners to open five bridgetender or locktender homes. A

passport was created for visitors. Those who collected a stamp from each of the five houses received a specially designed magnet, created just for this event. The Watch opened and staffed the East Millstone house. We then sent participants to Blackwells Mills, Griggstown, Kingston, and Port Mercer. Over 100 people took part in this new event, a rare opportunity to visit all these buildings opened and occupied by our nonprofit partners. The Five Canal House Challenge may become an annual event.

October brought Somerset County's annual "**Weekend Through the Past**," in which 30 historic sites in the county are all open and free for visitors. The Canal Watch staffed the East Millstone Bridgetender's Home on Saturday and Sunday. Our volunteers showed off the house, station, and outhouse. This is one of the few times during the year when visitors can tour the house. The Canal Watch has been cleaning and opening this site for over ten years!

Finally, the **Tour de Towpath** was staged on October 26 as the culmination of the 50th anniversary year. We spent over \$10,000 to organize and coordinate this highly successful event. Our thanks go to all members and friends who helped and especially to our organizers and fundraisers, Brad Fay and Eric Epstein of Global Impact. Through this event we introduced our historic waterway to many people in the Trenton area. All who participated had a wonderful time. Perhaps the Tour de Towpath will become an annual event.

So, we had a good and busy year thanks to everyone who volunteered.

**HAPPY 50TH ANNIVERSARY TO THE DELAWARE AND RARITAN CANAL STATE PARK AND THE DELAWARE AND RARITAN CANAL COMMISSION!**





# WHAT IS IT?

## Canal terms explained

**Milepost**—On the D&R Canal, a milepost is a post indicating the distance in miles from or to one end of the canal (New Brunswick or Bordentown). We are fortunate to have many, but not all, of the mileposts along the 44-mile length.

Our mileposts are placed diagonally, so that mule drivers could see two

numbers: the distance to New Brunswick and to the opposite end in Bordentown. Those two numbers always add up to 44, the length of the main canal.

The mileposts are made of concrete.

If you see that a milepost has been vandalized, please call the park office at 609-924-5705. Please do not attempt to remove the graffiti yourself.



Dave Barber, past president of the American Canal Society, stands at milepost 43/1 just north of Bordentown. Someone walking from the left can see that there are still 43 miles to go before reaching New Brunswick.



Milepost 38/6



Milepost 24/30



This fancier version shows the halfway point, near Rocky Hill



**Griggstown in the Waning Summer**  
By Ken Simon

“Love lives inside our lover’s brokenness.”  
Henri JM Nouwen

As summer fades, the green leaves  
show the yellow and orange highlights  
of their youth melting away into autumn.  
There a narrow shaded gravel causeway  
passes an idle ancient grist mill  
that had separated the heart of the wheat fruit  
from the broken husks of the wheat’s past.

A tow path transects the causeway  
and separates the D&R Canal from  
the nearly empty channel of the ebbing Millstone River.  
The broken bow of a weathered skiff hangs on the rocks  
exposed by the river’s inadequacies.  
The abundant spring flow has since receded  
to a modest stream trickling north.

The towpath recalls the proud past  
of the river and its lover, the D&R,  
whose reeds bend to the canal’s unabating flow  
as it makes its way to marry the Millstone at the Raritan.  
There is bending on the left and emptiness on the right.  
The reeds reach out to receive the dwindling channel.  
The broken bow and dry rocks long for the bending reeds.

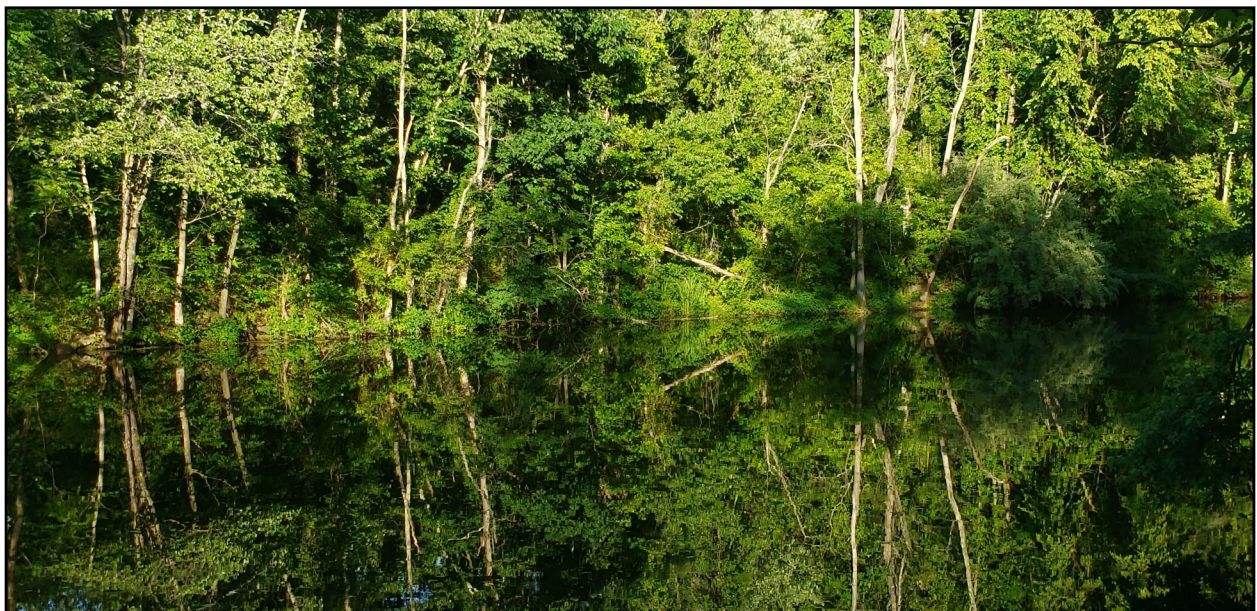


Photo by Mark Manto

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Alexandra Pinz

Sherief Shaaban

### World Canals Conference Returns to the USA in 2025

Registrations are now open for the exciting World Canals Conference to take place on September 21-25, 2025 in Buffalo, New York.

In the last issue, we invited you to get on board to be sure to receive all of the latest news and information, allowing you to plan your travel next year.

*Photo: the replica canal boat Seneca Chief at the Commercial Slip in Buffalo, open to visits by the public during the 'Canal Fest' in August 2024. © Buffalo Maritime Center*

At the conference, the *Seneca Chief* will ceremoniously leave Buffalo for New York City, reenacting the original “Wedding of the Waters,” which took place in October of 1825. That symbolic voyage simulated the joining of the Great Lakes and the Atlantic Harbor. Just off Sandy Hook, New Jersey, water from the Great Lakes was poured into the Atlantic Ocean.

Visit the conference website to learn about registration and pre- and post-tours: [www.wcc2025buffalo.com](http://www.wcc2025buffalo.com).



Photo courtesy Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor



**Class of 2024-2027**

Tom Lederer (Princeton)  
Joseph Ciccone (Lawrence Township)  
Charles Martin (Franklin Township)  
Sarah Verbeke (Bridgewater)

**Class of 2022-2025**

Linda Barth (Somerville)  
Robert Barth (Somerville)

Christopher "Kip" Bateman (Branchburg)  
Barbara ten Broeke (East Millstone)

**Class of 2023-2026**

Theodore Chase (Griggstown)  
Tim Roth (Long Valley)  
Laurie Reynolds (Bound Brook)  
Barbara Ross (Princeton)

**Saturday, December 14 -- Mercer County  
Science Under the Stars: Astrophotography -  
How To Do It & What You Can Get**

4:15 pm

Join us in the Planetarium at the State Museum, 205 West State Street, Trenton, for this free science talk. Guest speaker Dr. Robert Vanderbei will introduce you to the basics of astrophotography that can be done from home using affordable equipment. Dr. Vanderbei will show several pictures of stars clusters, nebulae, and galaxies taken from his driveway. We'll also learn how taking astrophotographs of the same object over the course of weeks, months, or years can lead to discovering how that object changes over time.

Reserve your seat here: <https://forms.office.com/g/0vJ0yXM>

**Tuesday, January 14 -- Mercer County  
Hightstown Historical Society offers a Special Program January 14th at 7 pm.** Although some of us are quite familiar with **Peddie School** and its campus, many of our members and neighbors are not. **Peddie** has offered to allow us to hold a meeting in **Longstreet Hall**, the oldest remaining school building on campus. **Dr. David Martin**, a Peddie faculty member and school archivist, will give a talk on the history and names of the many buildings on campus. Dr. Martin has been at Peddie since 1975 and teaches Latin. He has also been active in various historical society projects over the years. The program will be approximately 1 hour in length. Cost is just \$10 a head.

Please confirm your attendance by **January 8th** by emailing [hightsewhs@gmail.com](mailto:hightsewhs@gmail.com) with a cc to me at [cstultsiii@gmail.com](mailto:cstultsiii@gmail.com). Non-members may also attend. After you respond, you will be emailed confirmation and parking instructions.

**EVENTS YOU MAY WISH  
TO ATTEND**



HOLCOMBE-JIMISON FARMSTEAD MUSEUM  
1605 DANIEL BRAY HWY (ROUTE 29) LAMBERTVILLE, NJ

**Christmas On The Farm  
Winter Wonderland**

**Winter Decorations and Santa in the 1711 House,  
Craft Vendors, Kids Craft, Food, Live Music,  
Gingerbread House Competition**

more information on the Gingerbread House competition  
will be upcoming on our website [www.holcombe-jimison.org](http://www.holcombe-jimison.org)

**DECEMBER 14 & 15, 2024 10am – 4pm**

**Admission: \$5.00, age 5 & under free**



The Holcombe-Jimison Farmstead Museum is located at 1605 Daniel Bray Highway (Route 29), Lambertville.



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](mailto:barthlinda123@aol.com) and she will mail a printed copy to you.



The 2025 D&R Canal Watch calendar is nearly sold out. The judges have again chosen stunning pictures taken by our friends and members who love the canal.

To purchase a copy, please contact Linda Barth at (908-240-0488) or at [barth-linda123@aol.com](mailto:barth-linda123@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. Larger date squares and more holidays this year.

This year's full-color calendar features images taken by people who visit the towpath. The photographs show people walking, cycling, and just sitting and admiring our lovely park. And, of course, there are images of wildlife and natural beauty.

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



Pedestrian bridge at Demott Lane  
Photo by Shaun Daley

### Board of Trustees

Linda Barth, president  
Charles Martin, vice president  
Ted Chase, secretary  
Tom Lederer, treasurer

Robert Barth  
Christopher "Kip" Bateman  
Joseph Ciccone  
Laurie Reynolds  
Barbara Ross  
Tim Roth  
Barbara ten Broeke  
Sarah Verbeke

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

[www.canalwatch.org](http://www.canalwatch.org)  
<https://www.facebook.com/dandrcanalwatch/>  
[info@canalwatch.org](mailto: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:

- **Sponsored a number of events for the park's 50th Anniversary and created the Tour de Towpath.**
- **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.
- Sponsored star-gazing and solar observation 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 175<sup>th</sup> 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

Canal Watch Achievements (continued on next page)



## Canal Watch Achievements (continued from previous page)

- 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 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 2025

We would like to remind our members to please renew their membership. You can do so online by visiting [www.canalwatch.org](http://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 2025 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](http://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)