

# D&R CANAL WATCH

Number 43

[www.canalwatch.org](http://www.canalwatch.org)

October 2008

## CANAL WALK IN TRENTON—OCTOBER 12

Join D&R Canal Watch members Bill Valocchi and Erik Jetzt as we walk a two-mile section of the feeder canal in Trenton on Sunday, October 12.

We'll meet at Ellarslie Museum in Cadwalader Park at 9:00 am, walk the feeder to the battle monument park, and tour a townhouse development under construction along



The Parkside Aqueduct carries the canal over Parkside Avenue.



the feeder. The group will then be driven back to the park or, of course, you may choose to walk back to your car.

Along the way we will see an aqueduct (left), three bridge tender's homes, and the site of the largest basin on the feeder. We may even detour to the Petty's Run archaeological dig near the State House. You may want to bring your lunch or eat nearby and then visit Ellarslie, the Trenton City Museum, open from 1:00 to 4:00.

### Petty's Run

Between the State House and the Old Barracks, archaeologists are peeling back the layers of history along the historic stream known as Petty's Run. Visitors can see the remains of a colonial iron-and-steel works and a 19th-century paper mill come gradually to light as excavations progress. Follow the progress at [www.pettysrun.org](http://www.pettysrun.org), a journal of a journey that flows backward and forward in time on the doorstep of the New Jersey State House.

Travel forward and visualize the new Capital State Park taking shape over the next few years — imagine these industrial ruins restored and interpreted, a draw for tourists visiting our unique state capital where heritage comes alive. Of particular interest to canalers will be the Petty's Run culvert, which passes under the feeder a quarter-mile upstream and into which the canal dumped water; also the Wall/Davisson paper mill (c.1827-1876), of which we have massive foundations and which had an agreement with the canal company to draw off water power (64 inches, four feet of head, at an annual rent of \$256).

### CADWALADER PARK FAMILY FUN DAY

On Saturday, October 11, join the 1st Annual Fall Family Day in Cadwalader Park, from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Sponsored by the Hillcrest Civic Association, the event will include a two-mile fun run/walk fundraiser around the park, a picnic, a children's' craft event, a community baking competition, and voter registration. Enjoy an old-fashioned picnic at old-fashioned prices.

The Canal Watch hopes to have a table and will share with the public information about the canal and our organization. If you can join us for an hour or two at our table, please contact Linda Barth at [barths@att.net](mailto:barths@att.net) or 908-722-7428.



#### KALLESSERS WELCOME NEW ADDITION

On August 8, Park Superintendent Patricia Kallesser and her husband, Steve, welcomed their first child. Antonio Steven Kallesser weighed in at 8 pounds, 14.9 ounces. The entire family is happy and doing well.

#### ...AND BEST WISHES FOR A HAPPY PAIR

Jan Holms, the administrative analyst at the D&R Canal Commission, and Dan Saunders, of the State Historic Preservation Office, tied the knot last month. They plan a honeymoon in Italy in October.

#### COMING SOON!

#### PLANS UNDERWAY TO MARK 175TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CANAL'S OPENING

The year 2009 will mark 175 years since the opening of the Delaware and Raritan Canal. A group of dedicated volunteers, led by park historian Vicki Chirco, has met to brainstorm ideas for next year's celebration.

Among the suggestions are: Meet the Authors Day; a canal-side picnic; a movie night, featuring videos about the D&R Canal; and much more. Stay tuned for updates in our next issue.

#### GOT PHOTOS, ANYONE?

Did one of your ancestors live along the canal in the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century? Do you have family photos hidden away in the attic? Park historian, Vicki Chirco, and Barbara Ross are working on an exhibition and publication on the D & R Canal lock and bridge houses. They have even discovered one they didn't know still existed! They are especially interested in finding early photographs of canal houses in Ewing Township, Trenton and Franklin Township (the part along the Raritan River). They have covered all of the obvious archives and published sources. Please email Barbara at [albatross8@verizon.net](mailto:albatross8@verizon.net) if you think you can help.

#### GEORGE WASHINGTON, TOM PAINE, TO RE-ENACT MILLSTONE RIVER EVENT

Back in 1783, Thomas Paine was visiting General Washington at Rockingham. The conversation got around to the local tradition that water in the Millstone River could be set on fire when mud at the bottom was disturbed. Two of Washington's officers argued that the fire was due to "bituminous matter" that rose to the surface, whereas Paine argued instead that it was due "inflammable air" that got loose from the mud.

To settle the matter, on November 5, 1783, Washington, Paine, and others took a scow out on the river. Some soldiers stirred up the mud with poles, while Paine and Washington held lighted paper close to the surface. The gas that bubbled up ignited, which Paine said confirmed his "inflammable air" hypothesis.

According to Professor Doug Eveleigh of Cook College, this experiment duplicated the discovery seven years earlier by the Italian scientist Alessandro Volta that methane was a biologically formed gas.

In a letter to the American Society of Microbiology, Professor Eveleigh claimed that since Washington was probably not aware of Volta's finding, the Millstone episode was an important independent discovery. Eveleigh and Chase comment, "We hope that subsequent American presidents will maintain the keen interest in science expressed in this first major scientific experiment of the young Republic."

On **November 5, 2008**, at dusk, Professor Eveleigh, Canal Watch board member Ted Chase, and their team will attempt to re-create this moment in New Jersey history. You are invited to view the action from the Route 518 bridge over the Millstone River in Rocky Hill at dusk on that day.

## NEWS FROM OUR CANAL PARK AGENCIES

### NEW JERSEY WATER SUPPLY AUTHORITY

The authority has completed the rehabilitation of the Alexauken Creek spillway and a six-barrel culvert at Sta. 122+00, about a half-mile north of Prallsville. Both projects involve hand-laid stone work.

### CANALEDAR—Events of the D&R Canal Watch and related groups

**October 11—Fall Frolic For Children at the Blackwells Mills Canal House:** Kids bring your parents and come to the historic canal house for an afternoon of fun! Games, Halloween pumpkins to paint. Unbe the Canal House Magician perform magic just for you. This family event will be held at the Blackwells Mills Canal House, corner of Blackwells Mills and Canal Road in Franklin Township. 1:00 - 4:00 pm. Free.

**October 12—Walk the canal in Trenton with Bill Valocchi and Erik Jetzt.** See page one.

**October 18—Music for the Washingtons. Performers: Practitioners of Musick.** 2:00 pm, Rocky Hill First Reformed Church, Rocky Hill. Practitioners of Musick are not just musicians, they are scholars who meticulously research the music and the instruments they play. During this performance, they will be presenting music played and listened to by General and Mrs. Washington, using instruments of the 18th century, including harpsichord, violin, cello, English flute (recorder) and voice. \$5.00 entrance fee.

**October 25—Fall Fling at the Island:** 1:00 - 4:00 pm. The state park will offer a variety of activities for kids: pumpkin painting, hay rides, and crafts! Because it is the Halloween season, we invite everyone to come in costume. If you do, be sure to stop at the office and pick up a treat! Enjoy a live animal presentation by Eyes of the Wild. *Mammals Mania* is an exciting 45-minute program featuring a variety of live mammals. Starting at 2 pm, this presentation will leave you with a better understanding of, and respect for, the animals that share our planet. So kids bring your family to Bulls Island (*located 7 miles north of Lambertville off Route 29 in Hunterdon County*) for all the fun! Rain or shine. **All activities are free.**

**November 1—Bob Barth, Canal Watch events chairman, will lead a **bike ride**** along the towpath from Griggstown to Route 1 in Lawrence Township and back (26.5 miles). Those who want a shorter ride can discuss it with the group and turn around earlier. Meet at the parking lot along the Griggstown Causeway at 10 a.m. Questions? Call Bob at 908-722-7428.

**November 8—History Walk ~ From Nursery to Canal:** Enjoy a round-trip walk with Vicki Chirco, park historian, from the park office at 145 Mapleton Road, Kingston, to the canal towpath and the Kingston Canal House. Meet at the park office at 10:00 am for this leisurely 2-mile walk. Follow a portion of the Mapleton Preserve (the former Princeton Nursery site). Come enjoy a fall morning outdoors while burning a few calories and learning a bit about the historic resources of the D&R Canal State Park! **Weather permitting. Pre-registration REQUIRED** (609-924-5705 or [dnrnaturalist@verizon.net](mailto:dnrnaturalist@verizon.net)).

**November 8 & 9 - "The Curtain of Separation Will Soon be Drawn" - *The General Takes His Leave, Rockingham 1783.*** All day, Rockingham State Historic Site, Kingston. Von Heer's Marechausee is encamped once more, guarding General Washington in his final days at Rockingham. On Sunday, the General will take his leave of those assembled with a review of the major events during his tenure at the site, including the official word of the signing of the Treaty of Paris to formally end the American Revolution and the Farewell Orders to the Armies, penned during his stay. \$5.00 donation appreciated.

**Saturday, November 15—Hike the newly-opened Trail, Bordentown to Duck Island.** 10–noon. Join the park's naturalist and historian, Stephanie Fox and Vicki Chirco, for a three-mile canal walk from Bordentown, along Duck Island, past buried Lock 2, to Lambert Road in Trenton. Meet at Scenic Overlook parking lot on I-295, north of Bordentown. All ages are welcome. **Weather permitting. Pre-registration REQUIRED** (609-924-5705 or [dnrnaturalist@verizon.net](mailto:dnrnaturalist@verizon.net)).

**February 28 (Saturday). Light rail trip through the marsh and to Roebling. Meet at 11:00 am.** Leaders: Barbara Ross and Doug McCray. Join us for a whirlwind guided tour by light rail into the nineteenth century between Roebling and Trenton! Meet in the parking lot of the Bordentown Light Rail station (100 W. Park Avenue at Prince Street, above the boat landing) at 11:00 a.m. sharp, purchase tickets, and be treated to a brief introduction before boarding the train at 11:25 for a 5-minute ride south to Roebling; see cuts in the shoreline and a sunken canal boat from the era when coal-laden boats crossed the river from Bristol to the D & R Canal. Roebling's abandoned Kinkora plant and perhaps even an eagle may also be observed.

Exact times are subject to railroad schedules, so please verify nearer the time of the tour. Space is limited and pre-registration is strongly advised; call 609 924-2683 after February 15th. *(This program is co-sponsored by the Friends for the Marsh, Washington Crossing Audubon Society, D&R Canal Watch and the D&R Greenway Land Trust)*

**March 10**—Joint meeting with the Friends of the Delaware Canal. Details in the next issue.

**For more activities sponsored by the D&R Canal State Park, visit [www.dandrcanal.com](http://www.dandrcanal.com), click on the state park and scroll down to the Summer 2008 issue of the *Milepost*.**

Visit the D&R Canal State Park website, [www.dandrcanal.com](http://www.dandrcanal.com) for the latest events and activities.

D&R Canal Watch  
P.O. Box 2  
Rocky Hill, New Jersey 08553