



Number 107

www.canalwatch.org

October 2026



The brand new 2027 D&R Canal Watch Calendar is selling like hotcakes. Supplies are limited, so order your copy now.

To purchase a copy, please contact Linda Barth at barthlinda123@aol.com or 908-240-0488. 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's full-color calendar features images taken by people who visit the towpath. The photographs show people kayaking and cycling, plus many beautiful scenes along our historic waterway.

This year marks 53 years since the state legislature created the D&R Canal State Park and the D&R Canal Commission. Of course, it's also the 250th anniversary of the United States of America

More Canal Watch Activities and Events for 2026



Sunday, October 18: 10:00 a.m. Bike Ride on the Feeder Canal. Meet at Prallsville Mills, just north of Stockton Borough on Route 29. The ride, of about nine miles, will take us to the lovely village of Lambertville and south to the outlet lock. Then we will walk our bikes across the bridge to New Hope, Pennsylvania and return north on the Delaware Canal. **Helmet required.** Tim Roth, 973-222-0586, or timroth@comcast.net.

Saturday, October 24: Geology hike, 10:00 a.m. **Meet at Prallsville Mills, just north of Stockton on Route 29.** During this geology walk, participants will learn about the four geologic units of the Newark Basin along the D&R Canal. Walk led by Pierre Lacombe, retired USGS geologist, pjlacombe25@gmail.com.

Sunday, October 25: For the last day of the season, the Millstone Valley Preservation Coalition will host author Linda Barth from 1:00-4:00. She will sign and read from her children's books about a young canal boy working on the D&R and the Morris Canal.



Somerset County's Journey Through the Past heritage weekend

On Saturday and Sunday, October 10-11, the Somerset County Cultural and Heritage Commission sponsored its 21st annual Journey Through the Past. In this event, thirty-six historic sites throughout the county were open for visitors to tour at no charge.



Among the sites were historic homes, churches, a blacksmith shop, schoolhouses, three farms, two fire museums, a graveyard, a golf museum, a theater, and, of course, two bridgetender homes along our Delaware and Raritan Canal.

The Millstone Valley Preservation Coalition preserves the bridgetender's home in Griggstown as the headquarters of the Millstone Valley National Scenic Byway. The D&R Canal Watch opened the house in East Millstone, where we greeted about 60 visitors from 20 towns and 4 counties to tour the house and station. Guests were greeted by our corps of volunteers, including Sarah Verbeke, Tim Roth, Laurie Reynolds, Susan Data-Samtak, Anne Marie Lunemann, Steven Escobar-Mendez, Bob and Linda Barth, and Tom Lederer. And thanks to John Samtak and Warren Warner for their help on Friday.



Our entertainer was Richard Pawling, a reenactor who portrays 1870s canalboat captain John Hummel. "Cappy" Hummel represents hundreds of fellow canawlers (ditch diggers, towpath walkers, mulletenders, locktenders, and boatmen) who built and traveled America's canal systems.

Hear the "sneckehorn" blow, and hear the songs from the past as "Cappy" takes you for an entertaining, action-packed trek on the canal.

In two performances, Richard regaled the audiences with canal tales of working with the mules, training children to work with the mules, and how a boat "locks through," using his historically accurate lock model. His bowsman, Don Kline, assisted the captain, especially in measuring the height of the mules (see photo at right).

See more photos on page three.



**East Millstone
Bridgetender's
Home. Photos by
Robert and Linda
Barth**



SHRIMP BOX AND RIVER QUEEN EXCURSION by Capt. Bill McKelvey

On July 16, 2026, I joined the Senior Citizens of Long Hill Township, NJ trip, coordinated by Paulette Irlander.



The day was the peak of the local smoke from the Canadian wildfires. Transport was by chartered Vanderhoof Transportation Co., new Temsa TS45 motor coach No. 1155 (seen at left). It was built in Adana, Turkey and powered by a 455 HP 6-cylinder X12 Cummins diesel through an Allison B500 automatic transmission. No. 1155 had 56 seats for our group of 33 and was very comfortable. E. Vanderhoof & Sons (operating as Vanderhoof Transportation) is a family-owned charter bus company based in West Orange, New Jersey. Founded in 1918, the company originally began by providing daily transportation

services for workers commuting to the Thomas A. Edison Factory in West Orange.

Our driver, Elias, who has worked for Vanderhoof for 21 years, got us safely to the Shrimp Box in Point Pleasant Beach, NJ. Along the way we got a first glimpse of the new Greyhound buses in their striking deep navy, dark grey and silver paint scheme. It was a Canadian-built Prevost bus for their Northeast routes.

The Shrimp Box began in 1953 as a tiny take-out stand. It evolved from a 1940s commercial fishing dock and fish market operated by the Barmore family. Purchased by the Gyftakis family in 1999, the waterfront institution was rebuilt after Hurricane Sandy. There were several choices for the lunch. I chose the Manhattan clam chowder, Seafood medley (with shrimp, scallops, and flounder) with baked potato and mixed vegetables plus fresh Italian bread, drinks, and raisin, walnut, carrot cake—very good!

Across the inlet (known as Cooks Creek, which, like a canal, connects Lake Louise with the Manasquan River) from the Shrimp Box there were several commercial trawlers tied up and one sport fishing boat, the *Knucklehead*. It was being unloaded and a crane was used to lift an 8-foot shark up to the dock. The 90-foot ocean fishing boat *Gambler* (seen below) docks close to the Shrimp Box, near Manasquan Inlet. She was custom built in 2005 by Maine craftsmen with extra heavy construction, built for high speeds and high seas. *Gambler* is powered by 4 Detroit/MTU turbo charged diesel engines with a total of 3000 HP, turning four props, and is capable of speeds of up to 30 knots! Night fishing is illuminated with high-intensity flood and deck lighting, and she's the only boat to feature underwater lights built into the hull to attract sea life from stem to stern!



Diners can tie up their boats in the inlet at the rear of the Shrimp Box



A chartered Lakeland Bus Lines motor coach with a group from Franklin Lakes departed the Shrimp Box ahead of us, and we followed them to the *River Queen* for our afternoon cruise on the Manasquan River. Note: Lakeland is based in Dover, NJ and occupies the former trolley car barn of Morris County Traction Company on Blackwell Street.

When we arrived at Bogan's Deep Sea Fishing Center at Brielle, the Lakeland bus was unloading. Capt. Tony Bogan, son of Capt. Howard Bogan, stepped aboard our coach and gave us an orientation with safety precautions.

The Bogan family got its start renting rowboats in the Greenville section of Jersey City and founded Bogan's Basin in Brielle in 1930. The Bogan family and its first fishing boat, *Paramount*, played a heroic role in rescuing 67 survivors from the burning luxury liner *S.S. Morro Castle* (photo below) on September 8, 1934. The liner had 558 passengers and crew aboard. Capt. John Bogan, Sr., along with his sons John Jr. and Jimmy, navigated through rough seas and floating debris off the Jersey coast to bring people to safety.

Over the years the Bogans have owned and operated the fishing vessels *America*, *Atlantis*, *Claudia Jo*, *Columbia*, *Dixie*, *Dauntless*, *Escourt*, *Jamaica II*, *Pennsy*, and *Rex*. The current Bogan vessels are *Paramount*, *Jamaica*, *Paramount II*, and *River Queen*.

Let's start with *River Queen*, which docks on the Manasquan River, almost under the north end of the Route 35 bridge. The *Queen*, 80' long, 26.5' beam, 4' draft, was built near Harkers Island, NC in 1988 with a wooden hull and superstructure. She is powered by twin Detroit Diesel 6-71 engines, with twin propellers and rudders, has two decks, with a wheel house above and two stacks. She is a close replica to a river steamboat except that the stern wheel (which does not propel the boat) and stacks are only for appearance. Each covered passenger deck has enough tables and chairs for all passengers, plus a bar, and outside deck space. Interestingly, *River Queen* was navigated north on her delivery to Brielle via the Intercoastal Waterway. This route included the Albemarle & Chesapeake Canal, Chesapeake Bay, the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, Cape May Canal, Barnegat Bay, and the Point Pleasant Canal.



Photo of River Queen passing under the current Route 88 vertical lift bridge on the Point Pleasant Canal. Note: she is lacking her double stacks at this time.

We backed out of the dock, reversed, and went under the Route 35 bridge and then west on the Manasquan River toward the Point Pleasant Canal. It was interesting to see a preponderance of outboard-powered recreation craft in place of the vintage inboard-powered yachts. And, the recreational craft were powered by one, two, three, and sometimes four outboards with up to 250 HP each. The current record is eight outboards on drug running boats with total horsepower equal to a medium railroad diesel locomotive.

The two-mile Point Pleasant Canal, known originally as the Manasquan River and Bay Head Canal, had been a dream of local planners since the early part of the nineteenth century, but it became a nightmare shortly after opening. In 1908 the state began dredging its portion of the

Intercoastal Waterway, a channel north from Cape May. Although an initial attempt to have the canal included as part of the Inland Waterway had failed, by 1915 the project was finished north to Bay Head, and the state purchased the right-of-way for what was to become the canal. With dredging through the Bay Head marshland, the canal was finally begun in 1916. A half mile was dug before the United States entered World War I and construction was suspended. Although the Point Pleasant Canal was not available to protect maritime traffic from enemy submarines during WWI, another NJ canal did provide a protected inland passage—the Delaware and Raritan Canal. There is much documentation of naval vessels as well as military supplies and equipment taking advantage of the safe route of the D&R Canal.

Construction on the Point Pleasant Canal resumed in 1918 after emergency defense funding was secured. For seven more years excavation proceeded at a snail's pace because the state would only make small appropriations each year and costs climbed. The stop-and-go nature of the funding resulted in new bidding and frequently changing contractors. The LeChard Dredging Company of Point Pleasant took over the project for a while.

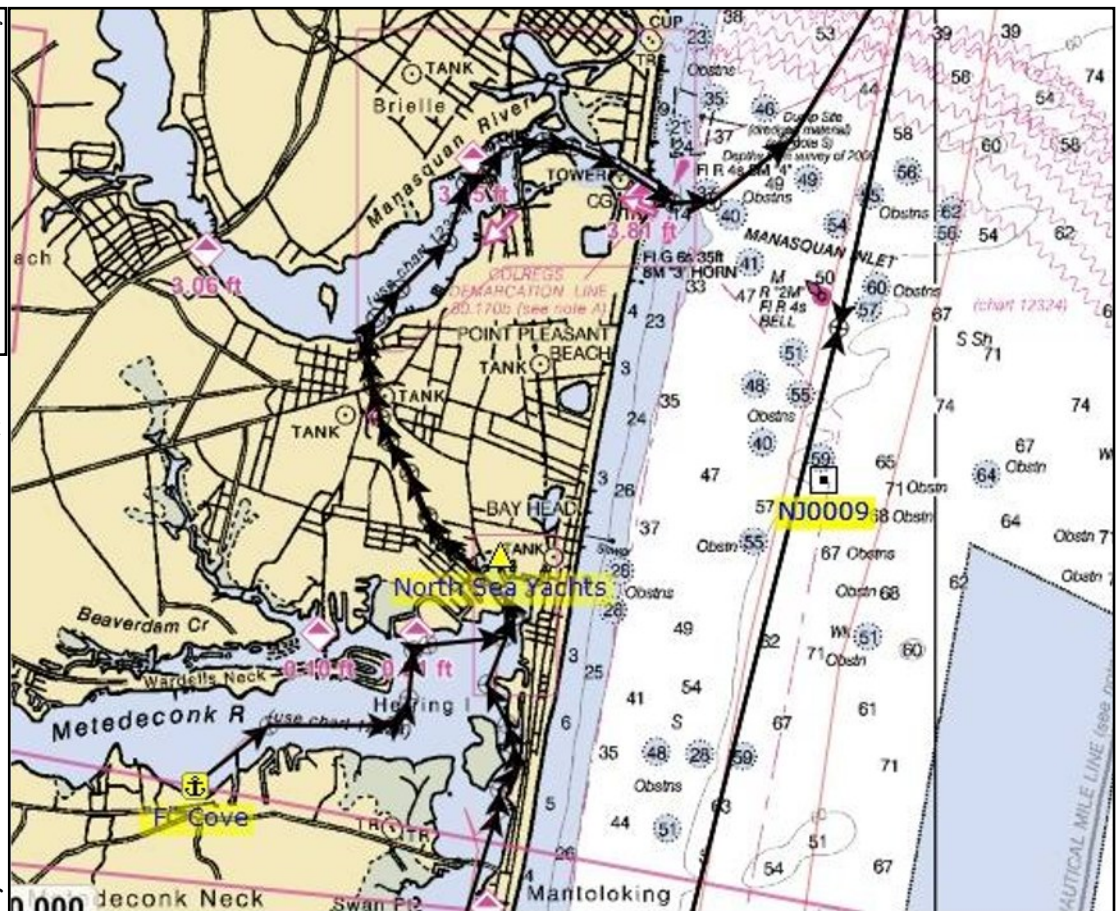
The original Route 88 bridge was constructed while the canal was still dry. On December 15, 1925 a scoop dredge lifted a shovelful of earth, and the waters of the Manasquan River and Barnegat Bay began to intermingle. Immediately after opening to navigation in 1926, the strong currents that have plagued the canal ever since began causing serious problems. The Point Pleasant Canal has NO locks! In less than six months its banks, which were not protected by bulkheads, were eroded, causing shoaling and nearly closing the canal. The intrusion of salt water and tides to the upper Barnegat Bay destroyed bass and pike fishing and diminished cranberry bogs. Environmental impact statements were not required during the era of construction. The Lovelandtown bridge was built in 1929, several years after the opening. The intense currents in the canal began to undermine the two bridges.

A disaster evolved as the Manasquan Inlet began to shoal over and then actually closed. The diversion of Manasquan River down the canal was blamed. Efforts to keep the inlet open failed. Finally, floating steam shovel dredges were brought in and jetties were built. The inlet was reopened in 1931. However, the inlet reopening returned the tidal currents to the canal, causing the resumption of erosion shoaling. Finally, in 1935 Federal officials began constructing wooden bulkheads to end the erosion problem. This took until 1947 to complete, but around 1960 the bulkheads themselves began to erode at their bases. The Army Corps of Engineers began placing boulders along the canal banks. However, this made some sections narrower, and with the same amount of water rushing through, those sections created very hazardous currents. The section by the Route 88 bridge became a series of rapids at certain tidal times.



Heading south through the original Rt. 88 bridge on the Point Pleasant Canal.

Map showing location of Point Pleasant Canal between Metedeconk River and the Barnegat Bay and Manasquan River. The Manasquan Inlet is the northern end of the Intercoastal Waterway.



The Point Pleasant Canal served primarily as a critical segment of the New Jersey Intracoastal Waterway during World War II. Because German submarines relentlessly attacked merchant shipping along the East Coast in 1942, the Army Corps of Engineers relied on the sheltered inland route to safely move bulk materials and shallow-draft naval vessels. Locally, the canal area east of Ontario Street, Point

Pleasant, was used as an artillery practice site.

The hazardous canal situation improved after both original bridges were replaced (Lovelandtown in 1972 and Route 88 in 1986); the wooden bulkheads were replaced by steel; and the rocks were moved. The original lower level, double leaf, Route 88 bascule bridge openings, which averaged over 4000 per year, caused legendary summer traffic back-ups for motorists heading to the Jersey Shore. The current modern higher-level vertical lift bridge, completed in 1986, known as Veterans Memorial bridge, greatly improves traffic flow and presents no impediment to water flow in the canal as did the original bridge.

In January 2022, \$3.2 million in Federal funding was approved for repairs to the canal's bulkheads, to address structural issues to ensure safe navigation. Please note: Navigation Charts state: "Dangerous Currents, Traverse at Slack Water." A controlling 4' depth (6' is desirable and available at high tide) in the Point Pleasant Canal is maintained by the US Army Corps of Engineers, and it is patrolled by the US Coast Guard. Currently traffic through the canal is primarily pleasure craft, with an occasional commercial fishing vessel or barge. *River Queen* (pictured at right) is the largest vessel to regularly use the canal.



In spite of smoky skies, our sightseeing trip on *River Queen* was pleasant and enjoyable, but soon over. Our return trip to Long Hill Township was only slightly delayed by the rush hour and we arrived about 5 p.m.

An interesting local attraction to visit is the NJ National Guard Militia Museum in Sea Girt, photos below. They display tanks, artillery, rockets, jet fighters, helicopters, jeeps, a submarine, hand guns, rifles, uniforms, memorabilia, and much more!



And in Brielle, visit the Glimmer Glass Bridge, at right.

The Historic Landmark 1898 Glimmer

Glass bascule bridge with its rolling counterweights on Brielle Road in Manasquan is a must see! Do not even think of crossing it with your bus! Please note that it has a 3-ton load limit and will not pass vessels more than 30' in width. However, if your boat is less than 9' high you can travel up Crab Town Creek and pass under the closed bridge. At least two railroad bridges of this rolling counterweight design were used on the Morris Canal: One was north of the Danforth Avenue area



of Jersey City and the other was at the Guard Lock in Dover. The latter was the location of the famous June 12, 1905 accident where the tender of Central Railroad of New Jersey steam locomotive No. 410 backed over the open draw bridge and fell upon a Morris Canal boat, sinking it, but there were miraculously no injuries.

Note: The *River Queen* only navigates the Point Pleasant Canal on cruises of two hours or more, so make advance plans. For those who prefer to take public transport, the NJ Transit Point Pleasant Beach railroad station on the North Jersey Coast Line is about a one-mile walk to the Shrimp Box. Sightseeing boats are available near the Shrimp Box, but, from there your best bet to get to *River Queen* and return to the railroad station would be by Uber or Lyft. From the Point Pleasant RR station to Jenkinson's Amusement Park on the boardwalk is about a 3,400' walk. But, they have an aquarium, arcades, games, sweet shops, and a train ride!

Note: the NJ Transit Bay Head station is the closest stop on the North Jersey Coast Line to the beach—1,500'—an easy walk!

The Vintage Auto Museum of NJ is small, but it has outstanding classic and race cars, memorabilia and

libraries. It is run by volunteers who, collectively, own about 300 vintage cars. This museum is very close to the south end of the Point Pleasant Canal. In addition, a nearby 2,000'-long canal connects Twilight Lake with Bay Head Harbor.

A motor coach trip with lunch and a cruise through the Point Pleasant Canal or a dinner cruise on *River Queen* would be an excellent canal education and history activity for the Canal Watch or the Canal Society of New Jersey. Many interesting side trips are described above. Fall is a great time for such a trip. Let's do it!

Thanks to the Point Pleasant Historical Society, Jacoby William Bogan Glantzman, Google maps, Google photos, and Google information for their assistance with this article.

2026 Canal House Challenge

On Sunday, September 13, the Canal Watch with four of our partner organizations opened to the public four D&R Canal bridgetenders' houses and one locktender's home.



Visitors to the Port Mercer Canal House in Lawrence during the 2026 Canal House Challenge

About 100 visitors had their "passports" stamped at each site and received a gift for the challenge of touring all five houses.

We thank our partners at the Blackwells Mills Canal House Association, the Millstone Valley Preservation Coalition, the Lawrence Historical Society, and the Kingston Historical Society. Special thanks to Joe Ciccone for organizing and publicizing the event. Our volunteers for that day were Sarah Verbeke, Ted Chase, and Bob and Linda Barth. And thanks to the lovely couple who helped clean the house on Friday.

Griggstown volunteers: Gail Martin, Michael Bell, Barbara ten Broeke.

Blackwells Mills volunteers: Sandra Fekete Krahling, Nancy Lasher, and Teresa Weaver.

Kingston volunteers: Sharon Hansen, Carol McAuley, Bob McAuley, Charlie Dieterich

Port Mercer volunteers: Members of the Lawrence Historical Society who volunteered were: Paul Larson, Jeff Lang, Michael Knab, Joe Ciccone. Students from Lawrence High School who volunteered were: Fatima Soumah, Letty Lopez, Lily Pressler, Leila Theard, Aspen

Next year we hope to add a sixth house to the Challenge.

Canal House Challenge (continued)

Pictures from the Kingston Historical Society



After the weather cleared, Charlie demonstrated how the Kingston canal lock worked sitting outdoors, so visitors could see the model and the concrete canal at the same time.



The house is decorated, as Sharon and Carol prepare for visitors.



Carol is ready with the “Canal Passport” stamp... how we kept track of folks visiting all five canal houses



At the Griggstown Bridgetender's house, Michael Bell and Gail Martin greet visitors. This house is also the headquarters of the Millstone Valley National Scenic Byway. It is normally open on weekend afternoons from April through October. Photo by Charlie Dieterich

New Purchase for Blackwells Mills Canal House Association

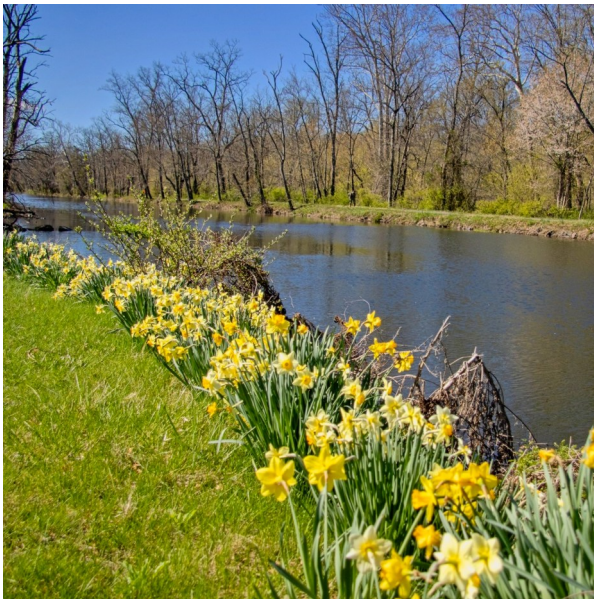
Thanks to a generous donation by two of our members, the Canal Watch has purchased a new picnic table for the Blackwells Mills Canal House Association.



The new table replaces one that was washed away during one of the floods of the nearby Millstone River.

As you can see, the table is black with benches attached. The benches have seat backs, so guests can lean back and watch the

lovely canal.



Daffodils on the towpath,
by Gary R. Becker

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Linda Barth, president
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Robert Barth
Christopher "Kip" Bateman
Joseph Ciccone
Laurie Reynolds
Barbara ten Broeke
Sarah Verbeke

Charles Martin is on leave for
a while but we still consult
with him.

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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 Capt. John Hummel's performance during Journey Through the Past.**
- **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 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

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 2027

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 2027 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)