STUDENTS ENGAGE IN OUTDOOR LEARNING AT THE C&O CANAL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

Hagerstown, Md. — “This is the best day out of the classroom!” was the verdict given by 70 fourth-graders from Bester Elementary after trading their normal classroom for one in the great outdoors of the C&O Canal National Historical Park (NHP).

The students’ classroom for the day was the Cushwa Basin in Williamsport, the pilot site of the C&O Canal NHP’s growing curriculum-based education program, Canal Classrooms. Representatives from the C&O Canal Trust, the park’s official nonprofit partner, were on site to deliver a $37,000 check to the staff and students of the Canal Classrooms program. The donation is the second from the Trust and will be used, in part, to expand the reach of Canal Classrooms, which currently connects every fourth grader in Washington County, approximately 3,000 students annually, to the resources of the canal. The program is aimed at fostering lifelong learning through hands-on, place-based, educational programming that aligns with PK-12 curriculum standards.

"I didn’t know there was so much to do here!" observed a ten-year-old girl at the day’s end. During their visit to the canal, students engage in three programs that bring science, history, and engineering to life in a meaningful, practical, and relevant way. Working as a team to move the massive gates of Lock 44 provides understanding of an early form of technology and engineering. Having a go at blowing a century-old boater’s horn and examining canal-era toys encourages students to explore the similarities and differences between their lives and those of children who walked the canal towpath a century ago. Programs apply science processes learned in their classroom in a tangible way as students examine the concepts in a real-world setting.

Even more poignant is that one visiting class was from an inner city, Title I school. The opportunity to bring students out of the classroom, out of the city, and into the canal’s

(continued on page three)
American Canals

BULLETIN OF THE AMERICAN CANAL SOCIETY

Managing Editor: Linda J. Barth
Contributing Editors: David G. Barber, S. David Phraner, Michael Riley, Bruce Russell, and Len Boselovic

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The objectives of the American Canal Society are to encourage the preservation, restoration, interpretation, and use of the historical navigational canals of the Americas; to save threatened canals; and to provide an exchange of canal information. Manuscripts and other correspondence consistent with these objectives are welcome.

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DEADLINE: Material for our next issue must be on the editor’s desk no later than June 15, 2014. Send to Linda Barth, 214 N. Bridge St., Somerville, NJ 08876; barths@att.net.

Material submitted to AMERICAN CANALS for publication should be typed and double-spaced or sent by email in WORD format. You may send actual photographs (which will be scanned and returned), or digital versions may be emailed or sent on a CD.

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natural and historical atmosphere is as much about life learning as it is book learning. In raising money to support the Canal Classrooms program, the C&O Canal Trust, which invested over $50,000 into the program in 2013, emphasized to its donors that Canal Classrooms was “inspiring lifelong learning,” planting and nurturing in students a curiosity in and appreciation for the C&O Canal and national parks.

“The Canal Classrooms program is an ideal way for the Trust to assist the park in reaching out to students in the area, and to their parents as well,” stated Trust President Mike Nardolilli.

“I’m coming back with my family!” was the claim of yet another young student. Hollie Lynch, C&O Canal NHP Education Coordinator, confirmed that rangers often have students return with their families to tour the canal and share what they’ve learned. “The excitement and curiosity we see in students is contagious,” Lynch stated, “Their love for exploring the canal and sharing this special place with their family is one way we know the programs have a positive impact on student learning.”

With the support of the C&O Canal Trust and other partners, the C&O Canal National Historical Park plans to expand the Canal Classrooms program this school year and next to other C&O Canal locations along the 184.5-mile park, including Cumberland and Great Falls.

“Maintaining an outdoor education program during tight fiscal times is difficult, but expanding a program is almost unthinkable without the support of partner organizations like the C&O Canal Trust,” stated C&O Canal NHP Superintendent Kevin Brandt. “The support offered by the C&O Canal Trust has helped enable us to implement our education strategic plan.”

The C&O Canal NHP’s education plan focuses on building a sustainable program, which it hopes to attain, in part, through leveraging partnerships. The Park is well on their way, having already established a Transportation Scholarship Fund, which offers bus stipends to schools planning field trips, and begun piloting the Canal Classrooms Corps, which engages local retired teachers to assist in delivering education programs in the park.

ABOUT THE C&O CANAL TRUST: The C&O Canal Trust was founded in 2007 as the official nonprofit partner of the C&O Canal National Historical Park. As the park’s official friends group, the C&O Canal Trust is committed to raising funds and resources to provide a margin of excellence for the park and to enhance the visitor experience. It provides opportunities for real and meaningful engagement to people of all ages, means, and abilities through philanthropy, volunteer opportunities, interpretive programs, and advocacy. The Trust also plays a leadership and supportive role in connecting the Park with its neighboring communities and other organizations throughout the region. www.canaltrust.org.

ABOUT THE PARK: The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park preserves and interprets the historical, natural and recreational resources of the C&O Canal. Over 5,000,000 visitors a year enjoy the opportunities for recreation and understanding that the park has to offer. For more information, visit the park’s website at www.nps.gov/choh.

ABOUT THE CANAL CLASSROOMS PROGRAM: The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park launched the Canal Classrooms education program in 2013. Education programs are available at a variety of park locations and include classroom extension lessons and STEM activities. For more information, visit www.nps.gov/choh or email the Park at cocanaleducation@nps.gov.
The Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Association celebrated its 60th birthday on March 27, 2014. It was on that date in 1954 that Justice William O. Douglas completed his famous hike from Cumberland to Georgetown with the editors of the Washington Post. Justice Douglas’ hike dissuaded the editors of the Post from supporting the plan to convert the towpath into a highway. On the last night of the hike, Justice Douglas formed a committee to make recommendations to preserve and protect the canal. He served as chairman of this group, which became the C&O Canal Association in 1957.

To celebrate the occasion, the association has announced the online publication in PDF format of William E. Davies’ book, The Geology and Engineering Structures of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal. The 636-page book is a 1989 draft of a lifetime work by Davies, a noted geologist and expert on flooding. Although published after his death and unfinished, this work is a uniquely valuable description of structures and formations along the 184-mile length of the canal as it travels through four major geological provinces—Piedmont, Blue Ridge, Great Valley, and Valley and Ridge. Davies’ book is an invaluable reference for students of the C&O Canal, an almost completely intact, 19th-century canal that is now the C&O Canal National Historical Park.

You can find the book on the C&O Canal Association website at www.candocanal.org/histdocs/Davies-book.pdf. Even though the document is a combination of typewritten pages and hand-written notes, you can still use the search features of your software to locate relevant material. The book is supported by 38 linear feet of documentation, including field notes, photos, sketches, maps, and copies of original sources. This material was donated to the Western Maryland Room of the Washington County Free Library in Hagerstown, MD.

Bill Davies, a graduate of MIT and Michigan State, is fondly remembered by many people in the association. He began collecting data on the canal in the 1940s. Participation in the 1954 Douglas hike intensified his interest. Davies investigated every foot of the canal, making detailed notes and drawing diagrams of the structures. Even though his career took him around the world, Davies continued to serve as an officer or director of the association from 1955 until his death in 1990.

Increased public awareness of the canal’s scenic beauty and historic significance set in motion a sequence of events that culminated in the creation of the C&O Canal National Historical Park January 8, 1971. You can read more about the landmark hike on the pages 4-7 of the December 1991 Along the Towpath and the National Park Service’s web pages on Justice Douglas’ 100th birthday and the Making of a Park.

Additional information on the C&O Canal NHP and the Douglas Hike may be found at www.nps.gov/choh/index.htm.

Remember that the C&O Canal Association is planning its own 60th birthday celebration with a hiking and camping weekend April 25-27.
Lock Star: The Fight to Save Oregon’s Willamette Falls
The National Trust joins local preservationists to save the 141-year-old Willamette Falls Navigation Canal and Locks. By Lauren Walser | From Preservation, January 1, 2014

For boats traveling the Willamette River in the 1800s, the Willamette Falls presented a formidable obstacle. Spanning the river between Oregon City, Oregon and what is now West Linn, Oregon, the horseshoe-shaped ridge and its 40-foot drop made it nearly impossible to transport passengers and goods between the river’s upper and lower sections—that is, until the Willamette Falls Navigation Canal and Locks opened on Jan. 1, 1873.

Built with locally quarried basalt blocks, the locks and canal are among the oldest multi-lift bypass lock systems in the country. They provided a safe, efficient way to travel the river, transforming Oregon’s economy and contributing to its growth. Sawmills, as well as grist, woolen, and paper mills, were built around the falls; over time, as commercial use of the river subsided, it became a popular recreational site. “This little bypass canal is like the mouse who roared,” says Sandy Carter, vice president of Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation and facilitator for its One Willamette River Coalition advisory committee. But in 2007, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which has owned the National Register-listed property since 1915, was staggered by a sharp decrease in funding for the canal and locks. (Allocations are determined by annual tonnage, or the total weight of all the cargo that passes through the system.) As a result, the site was largely closed, save for routine inspections. Federal stimulus money in 2009 did enable the Army Corps to finish inspecting and repairing the locks’ seven gates, which were inspired by a leaf-gate design credited to Leonardo da Vinci.

Two years later, however, an inspection revealed significant corrosion on the gudgeon anchors. In December 2011, the canal and locks were deemed non-operational. “We saw enough evidence of corrosion that we could not guarantee infrastructure safety or personal safety for anyone there,” says Diana J. Fredlund, public affairs specialist with the Army Corps’ Portland district. Carter and other community members, who have long been concerned about the future of the canal and locks, continued rallying for what Carter calls “one of the most important and impressive existing heritage resources around Willamette Falls.” Since 2004, local advocates have been organizing Lock Fest, an educational event meant to generate support for the canal and locks with history exhibits, information booths, music, and tours. “We want to make everyone aware of how great the locks are,” Carter says, “because if people don’t know about something, they can’t save it.” When the National Trust for Historic Preservation declared the site a National Treasure in 2012, Carter says the local efforts, which had been largely volunteer-driven, received a major boost. “It was a huge breakthrough,” she says. The National Trust’s Oregon field officer, Peggy Sigler, brought her expertise to the project and helped initiate a retroactive Section 106 review to study the effects of changes to the historic property.

Sigler, Carter, and others currently are working with the Army Corps to identify a new owner for the site. “We want to see the canal and locks open on a regular basis for all boats and all users, and to see them maintained and preserved in their original state,” Sigler says. But as it stands today, Fredlund says, the Army Corps believes federal regulations may require that they restore the site to working condition before authorizing it and turning it over to new owners. With the price tag for this effort at an estimated $3 to $5 million, and with limited funding available, it’s a difficult prospect. “We’re trying to find the right way to work through this,” Fredlund says, “but we’re not sure what that is yet.”

Carter hopes that one day the area around Willamette Falls will again welcome barges and commercial freighters, as well as boaters, kayakers, and others who enjoy the area’s natural beauty. “There aren’t many places in America where we still have the potential for both commercial and recreational use of a historic lock,” she says. “And around here, our history and our stories are rooted in the river and the locks and the mills.”

Photo courtesy http://willamettefalls.org/lockfest_2013
ACS Sales

If you haven’t checked the ACS website lately, you might not know that the society has the following items for sale:

- Best from American Canals #1, published 1980, $4
- Best from American Canals #2, published 1984, $4
- Best from American Canals #3, published 1986, $4
- Best from American Canals #4, published 1989, $4
- Best from American Canals #5, published 1991, $4
- Best from American Canals #6, published 1993, $5
- Best from American Canals #7, published 1996, $5
- Best from American Canals #8, published 1998, $6

Towpaths to Tugboats

- American Canal Guide #1: West Coast, published 1995, $6
- American Canal Guide #2: South, NC to FL, published 1974, $1
- American Canal Guide #3: Lower MS & Gulf, published 1975, $2
- American Canal Guide #4: WV, KY, Ohio River, published 1979, $3
- American Canal Guide #5: DE, MD, VA, published 1988, $3 (Copies Only)
- Canal Boat Construction Index (12 pages), published 1993, $2
- Canal Terminology (100 pages) Hahn & Kemp, published 1998, $15
- A Picture-Journey Along the Penn. Main Line Canal, published 1993, $10

ACS Burgee (blue on white cloth), $15
ACS cloth sew on patch (2"x3" red, white & blue), $3
"Save Your Local Canal" bumper sticker, $1

Shipping and handling: first two items $4; each additional item $1. Checks payable to: American Canal Society. Send orders to: Robert H. Barth, 214 N. Bridge Street, Somerville, NJ 08876-1637; 908-722-7428; barths@att.net. Please call or email with questions.

Food and Cooking on the Delaware and Hudson Canal, New York and Pennsylvania

In Malcolm Booth’s thesis on the D&H Canal, he has a section on food and cooking. Here is an excerpt that will highlight the differences between then and now:

Cooking aboard the canal boats was apparently accomplished in either of the two places, in the cabin or, if there were danger of the cabin becoming overheated, on a two-hole stove located in front of the stern pile.

Distinctive recipes also grew out of the canalling days. One was rice pies, which were connected with Lock 52 at Neversink, operated by the VanlInwegen family. The store here was known as the “pie store” where canal youngsters were able to buy large rice pices [sic] for 15 (cents) each or a quarter of one for five (cents). A rice pie may refer to a rice custard pie.

Another recipe, however, is: “I therefore prefer for a change to make a rim of boiled rice in a plain way, by boiling the rice until quite thick and soft, then filling it hot into a well-buttered ring-shaped mould made of tin. Now, by pressing the rice down, it can be turned out on a warm dish, and is ready at once to be filled with anything you please.”

Another writer says: “Mr. Evans’ description of a pie of the last century has an appealing flavor. They were robust, twelve or fourteen inches in diameter with a depth of three inches and they cost twenty cents. The Neversink locks were the places most famous for luscious and steaming apple and mince pies.”

In addition to the rice pies, Booth also talks about these delicacies: For delicacies or Sunday dinners, the canallers ate dried salt codfish and Honesdale “rudabecks” (probably Rutabaga). Salt mackerel were also sold in the “kit” for special occasions, but the ordinary diet consisted of eggs with ham.

Malcolm goes on to describe a typical banquet menu prepared for old canallers in Honesdale in 1938: “The consumed 100 pounds of potatoes, a barrel of cabbage and 50 pounds of roasted ham.”

Thanks to The Towpath, the newsletter of the Neversink Valley Museum of History and Innovation, Cuddebackville, NY.
Locked and Dammed: Neglect Erodes River Commerce
By Len Boselovic/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, March 2012
This is the third of a four-part series.

There is a price to be paid for neglecting the nation’s aging system of locks and dams, an economic engine in desperate need of a tune-up.

On the Monongahela River, the price tag could be as high as $1 billion annually if the breakdown of a lock or dam puts the river off limits to barges delivering coal to power plants, according to a study performed last year for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

About 500 miles down the Ohio River from Pittsburgh, 18 months of delays caused by repairs needed at three troubled locks is expected to cost one utility alone $16 million, according to a company spokesman.

For farmers in the Midwest, a three-month lock failure would add $71.6 million to the cost of moving grain to markets, according to a Texas Transportation Institute study issued in January.

The impact that the failure of a dam like the 105-year-old one on the Monongahela at Elizabeth could have on water supplies is worrisome enough that it has drawn the attention of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. “It is not a far-fetched scenario. It can happen,” said Joe Dinkel, executive director of operations for West View Water Authority, which serves more than 200,000 residents in the North Hills and Ohio River communities. The authority’s Neville Island plant gets its water from a pool created by a Corps dam at Emsworth.

Mr. Dinkel said short-term outages could be managed “through some creative engineering and logistical arrangements.” But if a dam would be out of commission for a period of several years, “that would be very troubling to us,” he said. “It would put us in a bind for a protracted period of time.”

The likelihood of a lock or dam being knocked out of commission for several months or longer has increased in recent years, as aging facilities along the nation’s waterways have become harder to keep running and more expensive to care for. Efforts to build new locks and dams have been plagued by cost overruns measured in hundreds of millions of dollars and construction delays measured in decades.

And statistics indicate the Corps is losing the fight to keep the old structures working. Unscheduled lock closures nationwide have spiked in recent years, particularly in Pittsburgh. Western Pennsylvania has some of the oldest locks and dams on the 11,000-mile inland waterway that the Corps maintains.

Moderate- and high-use locks in the Pittsburgh district were out of operation 2,255 hours in the fiscal year that ended in September, according to the Corps. That compares to 879 hours in fiscal 2010 and 1,441 hours in fiscal 2009.

More than 70 percent of the down time last year involved unscheduled closures, where unexpected mechanical, structural, or hydraulic problems disrupted river traffic.

“Failures have been occurring and will continue to occur at an accelerated rate,” said William Harder, a former navigation manager in the Corps’ Great Lakes and Ohio River division who retired last year. Mr. Harder estimates it would take at least three years to replace a broken lock on the Monongahela and a minimum of six years to replace a dam. If such drastic measures were required, the impact of a prolonged river outage might come as a surprise to consumers, who would pay the costs related to the outage.

Locks and dams make it possible to move about 550 million tons of coal, grain, petroleum, and other vital commodities at a price more than $14 per ton cheaper than by rail or truck, according to a 2010 report by a Corps-industry task force.

Without the barges, more trucks would clog the nation’s highways—it takes more than 1,000 trucks to carry the coal that a standard 15-barge tow

Falling further behind

Two sources provide the money used to address an $8 billion backlog in repairing and replacing locks and dams on the nation’s rivers.

Users fees are not one of them. Barge operators pay a 20-cent per gallon tax on diesel fuel they use, which raises about $85 million annually. Taxpayers match that, making about $170 million available each year.

At a $170 million-per-year pace, it will take more than 22 years to generate the $3.8 billion needed to complete seven major projects already under way. Those include rehabilitating the Emsworth dam on the Ohio River and building new locks on the Monongahela.

Once that’s done—in the 2030s—work could start on another $4.3 billion in projects that Congress has authorized but not funded.
can move.

“Our river system and water system are really a key economic engine,” said Dan Mecklenborg, of Ingram Barge, a Nashville, Tenn., barge operator.

Gridlock on the rivers

Because the public doesn’t really grasp the role rivers play in the economy, the Corps and industries that rely on the waterways find it difficult to generate support for repairing or replacing aging river infrastructure.

“We have a hard time explaining to John Q. Public how important the [water] transportation system is,” said Martin T. Hettel, the American Electric Power manager responsible for moving coal on AEP barges to the Columbus, Ohio, utility’s power plants. He said barge operators are dealing with significant delays at the Markland lock on the Ohio River near Warsaw, K y., 531 miles down river from Pittsburgh, because of structural problems there.

Mr. Hettel said one day in mid-February, AEP had 23 boats waiting to get through Markland. At the rate the system was moving, it would take the last boat in line two days or longer to pass through, he said.

The traffic jam was caused by the failure of gates on Markland’s 1,200-foot-long main lock in 2009. That has forced barge operators to break up and reassemble tows of 15 barges so they fit into the 600-foot-long auxiliary lock.

Breaking up and reassembling a tow once it gets through the lock takes two hours or longer vs. the 45 minutes needed to move 15 barges through Markland’s main lock. From July 11 through 9 a.m. Monday morning, barges waited an estimated 61,483 hours to get through Markland, said Stephen D. Little, president of Crouse Corp., a Paducah, Ky., barge operator. That’s the equivalent of 2,562 days that boats sat in traffic instead of moving goods, he said.

One set of gates at Markland’s main lock has been replaced, said Mr. Hettel. But problems with hinges on the other set and high water late last year will delay completion of the project until this summer. He said 18 months of delays caused by problems at Markland and two nearby locks will cost AEP an estimated $16 million. “The cost of all these delays are absorbed by the consumer,” Mr. Hettel said.

The impact of lock problems was real enough in 1985, when flooding caused barges to break loose and slam into the Maxwell lock in Fayette County, 61 miles up the Monongahela from the Point. That lock was closed for more than a month.

Press accounts said 1,500 miners at five nearby coal mines were laid off as a result. A less serious outage occurred at Maxwell five years later.

If problems close the Monongahela for an extended period of time, the 5 million tons of coal delivered by barge to U.S. Steel’s Clairton plant annually would have to be moved by rail or truck.

That would be more expensive and take more time, making the steelmaker’s Mon Valley operations “significantly less competitive,” spokeswoman Erin DiPietro said.

Coal producers, steelmakers, and electric utilities are not the only industries relying on the nation’s aging river infrastructure. About 90 percent of the corn and soybeans exported from Mississippi gulf ports get there by barge, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

“Barge is the cheapest form of transportation we have,” said Laura Foell, who with her husband works a 900-acre farm in Schaller, Iowa.

A study commissioned by the United Soybean Board estimated a three-month lock outage would shift 5.5 million tons of grain from barge to rail, increasing transportation costs by $71.6 million, or $13 per ton.

Between 80 and 90 percent of those costs would be passed on to consumers, said C. James Kruse, of the Texas Transportation Institute, the Texas A&M University affiliate that conducted the study.

Institute researchers estimated a six-month closure of a lock on the Ohio would increase wholesale electricity costs by $130 million for consumers in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Massachusetts.

Impact on power, water

The Corps study that concluded the price tag for a one-year outage on the Monongahela could be as big as $1 billion was based on how much more it would cost to produce electricity and how much of those costs could be passed on to consumers and business.

It did not measure the ripple effects those increases would have on the broader economy.

The study indicates more than 21 million people would be affected. It assumed there would be enough rail
cars and trucks to deliver coal to power plants, and that no brownouts or blackouts would occur.

A spokesman for FirstEnergy, which has 878,000 customers in Western Pennsylvania, acknowledged an extended outage would have an impact. He declined to speculate what it would do to the price of electricity.

“Many other factors also have the potential to affect the price of electricity in a region, particularly overall customer demand and the weather,” FirstEnergy’s Mark Durbin said.

A spokesperson for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security said the agency is assessing problems the failure of the locks and dam at Emwsworth on the Ohio River would have on the region and how quickly measures could be taken to return conditions to normal.

A spokesman for Pennsylvania American Water, which serves 220,000 households and businesses in Western Pennsylvania, said treatment plants in Baldwin Borough, Elrama, and Brownsville rely on the Monongahela River.

The Corps’ dams create a pool of water deep enough for Penn American’s intake valves to pump water out of the river. If a dam broke, the river would drop below the valves. Pumps would be brought in to solve that problem, spokesman Gary Lobaugh said. The cost of those contingency plans is already built into the company’s rates.

Mr. Lobaugh said Penn American is providing information on the issue to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, which is studying what would happen if a dam failed. “We don’t envision a scenario with the dams that would compromise the amount of available source water,” Mr. Lobaugh said. “If we were to encounter such a scenario, measures such as mandatory calls for conservation by our customers would be enacted.” Len Boselovic: lblogovic@post-gazette.com or 412-263-1941.

### CANAL TOWN CONTEXT AND SURVEY COMPLETED

In 2013 the Allegheny Ridge Corporation completed an intensive survey and documentation of historic canal-era resources in the communities of Huntingdon, Hollidaysburg, and Williamsburg, Pennsylvania. The multi-year project was funded by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and was completed by Huntingdon native and Huntingdon County Historical Society member Scott D. Heberling of Heberling Associates, Inc., a historical and archaeological consulting firm based in Alexandria, PA.

The purpose of the study was to provide information to support future historic preservation and recreation initiatives of the Pittsburgh-to-Harrisburg Main Line Canal Greenway, a program that celebrates the legacy of the Pennsylvania Main Line Canal and links its historic canal-era towns, promoting economic development through heritage tourism.

The study resulted in a detailed and richly-illustrated report that includes a review of existing information, an annotated bibliography, and a history of each town before and during the canal era.

A limited number of electronic (PDF) copies of the complete survey report are available to the public at no cost. To request a CD, please email Scott Heberling at: sheberling@heberlingassociates.com.

Canal Basin Park at Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania, opened in 2002, consists of the Reiser House Visitor Center, the Canal Boat Play Park, the Anne Sloan Borland Performing Arts Pavilion, the Sylvia Schraff Amphitheater, walking/biking trails, and a replica lock at the original site of the guard lock between the turning basin and the upper basin. Photos courtesy of Blairco.com and Advrider.com.
Our Branch of the Coryells in the 20th Century:

Florence somehow survived the canal’s putrescence and set her sights on being a physical education teacher. After receiving her degree, she returned to Belleville to teach in the very school in which she had been a student. Florence married her high-school sweetheart, Phillip Cooper, and the couple settled down in a new house in the upscale (at that time) Bellewood Park section of Belleville. My half-brothers Phil and Bob were born to that happy young couple. Tragedy struck and Phillip died in a hospital before the days of antibiotics while Bob and Phil were still infants. In 1930, Daniel, the former D&H lock tender died.

Widow Florence went back to work and found solace in the local church that she had attended regularly. Our familytreasures her 22-year perfect attendance Sunday school pin. The pastor of that Montgomery Presbyterian Church, Rev. Wilson Shoals Phraner (1852-1933), officiated at the Cooper nuptials. He and his wife Isabel Carrie (nee Coe) had a son Spencer (1885-1845). Florence fell in love again, even though Spencer was seventeen years her senior, and they were married. Oh yes, both Spencer and his father Wilson had graduated from Princeton... on the Delaware and Raritan Canal.

Florence and her sons moved into the Phraner household at 23 Spruce Street in Bloomfield. The property backed onto the Morris Canal. They had one son, Spencer David (me). My step-brothers and I attended the Bloomfield (South) Jr. High School (now closed). In those days, kids walked to school, and our route was via the Morris Canal towpath from the old Lock #15 east lock house on Montgomery St. past the site of a small canal aqueduct crossing the Second River near the school. We took physical training at Wright's Field, jogging from the school gym to the field along the Morris Canal towpath and under the historic Berkeley Ave. bridge. It was at this school that I met Capt. Bill McKelvey, the ultimate canal historian and enthusiast. It seemed like every place the family settled or established any association was somehow canal-related.

Coneele, son of the D&H lock tender and Florence’s father, died in 1943. Florence was widowed for the second time when Spencer died in 1945. She went back to teaching, this time in the Caldwell-West Caldwell School system. In 1952, a rumor spread around our Spruce Street neighborhood about a new highway being proposed. In 1954, that rumor became reality, and the Garden State Parkway soon would take all the houses along the east side of Spruce Street between Fremont and Montgomery streets. Included was our #23, a house that Rev. Wilson Phraner had built in the 1890s. That segment of Spruce Street became a frontage road for the new highway. The highway planners had selected the vacant alignment of the Morris Canal for construction of the new parkway and its frontage roads. We went in search of a new homestead. Mom wanted a place with a spectacular view. Finally we found the ideal property. We served as the general contractor for the construction of the house, performing much of the work in person on site during the summer of 1954. The property was located in the settlement of Towaco in Montville Township, NJ.....on the Morris Canal. As a teenager, I ice-skated on a short watered section of the canal, that same canal my mother had learned to swim in fifty years earlier. Otherwise, as a teenager, my awareness of the canal and my family’s connections to it were minimal.

Along with my half-brothers Phil and Bob, I went to college at Lafayette in Easton, Pennsylvania, at the.
confluence of three canals: the Morris, the Lehigh and the Delaware Division of the Pennsylvania system. The association with canals continued and expanded within our family. After college, the army, and graduate school, I began my career in regional transportation planning. My first apartment was in Jersey City, four blocks from the Morris Canal Basin. Canals seemed inescapable for me.

In 1968, Elaine Mary Docke consented to be my wife, and a June 1969 wedding came off without a hitch, except for the heat and rain. We bought at house in Verona, NJ, far from any canal. I figured at this point, the family canal associations would cease. A daughter and a son followed. My old school chum McKelvey kept buggin’ me about some canal historical society in New Jersey, but I was too busy with family and career. I did finally join the Canal Society of New Jersey to get its newsletter, On the Level, and maybe go to a meeting or special event. As Elaine and I matured, our thoughts turned more to family history. Mom, Elaine, and our kids went back to the Promised Land to find our family roots at Lonesome Lock in the mid-1970s. I took pictures of the lock ruins with the granddaughter and great-great-grandkids of Dan Coryell, the lock tender at this very place. Through our interest in family history, the incidental and unintended canal associations became more apparent.

As the family interest in the canal was rekindled and grew, I recalled an old steel coal scoop with an engraving on the handle. Fortunately it had not been discarded in our forced move from the Spruce Street house in Bloomfield on the Morris Canal to Towaco, also on the Morris Canal. The letters on the wooden handle read “DHCC,” Delaware & Hudson Canal Company. This was the coal scoop of Daniel Coryell, the old lock tender! After some consultation with my mom, we thought it would be best to give the scoop to a canal museum, and what better one than the D&H Canal Museum in High Falls, NY. In the early 1970s, we trekked to High Falls and made the presentation to the museum president, at the time Don Martin. The old scoop was back on the canal, this time as a permanent and preserved artifact. Out came the camera again to record that event. On my next birthday, Mom gave me life membership in the D&H Canal Society. Now we not only lived on the canal, but were once again affiliated with the D&H through its progeny organization. The canal and family associations continued and were about to increase.

I learned that Elaine’s grandfather had built a camp in the Catskill Mountains at a place called Yankee Lake. All eight of us—the kids, in-laws, grandparents, and a large smelly retriever—all crammed into the little cabin for weekend vacations. It was a little tight (like the Coryells at the Lonesome Lock house), but we had great family times together. As I look back, the camp and lock house dimensions were similar and the number of occupants were the same, plus the dog. Hmmm. We were reliving, if only briefly, the lock tender’s family experience at Lonesome Lock. We started looking for a vacation place of our own by riding around the roads near Yankee Lake. Meanwhile, my mom Florence had become ill and was living in a nursing home. Elaine and I sold our house in Verona and bought Mom’s house in Towaco. We were back on the Morris Canal again.

One summer day as we patrolled the roads in eastern Sullivan County, we entered Wolf Lake, a conservation-themed community with a “Forever Wild” creed. We liked the natural looks of the place and found a “for sale” sign at a camp on Division Pond in the Wolf Lake complex. The year was 1980, and in August of that year, we closed on the place. One curious feature of the Wolf Lake preserve was the name of one of the major roads around the main lake, “Canal Road.” I soon learned that Wolf Lake and its estuary, Division Pond, were among five canal-owned reservoirs (including Yankee Lake) feeding the D&H Canal at its summit level. Now we were living on two canals. We pondered a name for the Division Pond place and finally it came to us—“Lonesome Loch.” In a century and a half, we had come full circle; the family and Coryell progeny were back on the D&H Canal!

Towpath Canals in the 21st Century:

So far, we have covered family history as it relates to canals. How have those canals evolved at the same time from nineteenth-century towpath transportation to something else in the twenty-first century? Examples abound, but for the most part, they are isolated small sections of canal restored as vest-pocket parks or modest
restorations as part of a larger project. This incremental approach to canal preservation and restoration, whether an intentional tactic or not, is effective in creating awareness in the public mind and preparing local officials for more ambitious projects that integrate the pieces as a coherent and contiguous greenway.

On the D&H Canal, larger scale, multi-jurisdictional efforts are underway to connect the separate local projects into a unified D&H Heritage Corridor or “Trailway.” A similar effort is underway for the Morris Canal in New Jersey. A good example of restoring the geographical integrity of a canal is the effort by volunteers to clear the towpath along the summit level of the D&H between the Neversink Valley Area Museum/D&H Canal exhibit in Cuddebackville/Neversink Aqueduct (Orange County NY) and the Sullivan County D&H Canal Museum and restoration at Phillipsport, Mamakating town. This towpath restoration runs nearly 20 miles from canal mileposts 56 to 74 (as measured from Honesdale). This is a recent impressive achievement. While not the fulfillment of the entire heritage corridor, other canal and railroad fragments are being prepared for inclusion into a longer trailway. Some of those northernmost segments, like the O&W Rail Trail in Marbletown, use the abandoned NYO&W right-of-way. Other parts use the vacant NYO&W right-of-way that occupied the abandoned D&H canal towpath between Ellenville and Kerhonkson vicinity. It is an excellent example of integrating various independent museums and restorations into a unified heritage corridor. There are other such efforts on the former D&H Pennsylvania Division and at the High Falls (NY) D&H Museum with its five locks project.

Not all canal restorations and re-watering projects are successful. The D&H Canal near the Lonesome Lock site provides an unfortunate example. Back in the late ‘60s and ‘70s, owners of a campground along Route 6 between the Lonesome Lock site and White Mills decided to enhance their clients’ camping experience by building a replica canal boat and giving rides on a short re-watered portion of the D&H Canal. A walking trail was extended farther with interpretive signs along the towpath to the Lonesome Lock site. As reported in American Canals, the resulting canal boat Emerson was not authentic in size or dimension, but it did serve its purpose. Just how many seasons it was used on the former D&H Canal is not clear. Though the campground canal restoration effort ultimately failed, the Emerson was obtained by the Hugh Moore Park/National Canal Museum in Easton and used on a restored section of the Lehigh Canal there. It was renamed Josiah White by its new owners and was ultimately replaced with a more robust, steel-hulled, purpose-built excursion canal boat still in use today. The good news for this part of the D&H Canal near White Mills is that the Wayne County Historical Society has an ongoing project to restore and interpret the site of Lock 31 West. Another canal boat project at the Neversink Valley Area/D&H Canal Museum is a boat that can double as an amphibious parade float, because it has wheels (photo, right). Unfortunately, low water in the canal and feeder at Cuddebackville has curtailed canal boat rides for the last two seasons.

The Chenango County Historical Society has few canal prism restoration opportunities since the Chenango Canal was an early (1878) abandonment. The society’s impressive museum in Norwich, NY has compensated with a scaled-down but otherwise close-to-authentic Chenango Canal boat that is self-propelled, but non-aquatic. It is used in parades and at special events to promote the museum and its programs. (The vintage Mack truck chassis and cab on which the canal boat float is installed is in itself a museum piece.)

The improvements along the bi-state D&H Canal heritage trailway/corridor will take many forms from re-watering the canal to historic markers, where greater preservation or restorations measures are inappropriate or impossible. One of the best examples is in the restoration of not just the canal physical properties, but in developing a keener understanding of canal culture through historic interpretation in museums and archives. These benefits are reflected in the comprehensive local museums and, in New Jersey, the Morris Canal Greenway and initiatives at the canal town of Waterloo Village. These efforts are particularly challenging because of development pressures, influence of the real estate sector, and home rule zeal in the local communities of New Jersey.

A more proactive canal preservation strategy in New Jersey is found on the Delaware & Raritan Canal (D&R). Unlike its more primitive cross-Jersey Morris Canal to the north, the D&R was preserved nearly intact post-abandonment in 1932 because of its enduring water supply function. Finding contemporary uses for canal
prisms that fit within today’s development and redevelopment plans is an important measure to be undertaken by canal advocates. The preservation of the D&R Canal as a waterway, linear park/trail, cultural resource, and watershed is regulated and protected by the independent D&R Canal Commission. It stands with the Pinelands, Meadowlands, and Highlands land management commissions in the state as a compelling example of regulating cultural and natural resources, land management, and conservation.

Postscript. This monograph is an expansion and detailing of an earlier illustrated paper prepared as a gift to my mother Florence and Aunt Hazel, both Coryells. Recent visits to the Wayne County Historical Society in Honesdale, PA, the Mamakating Historical Society in Summitville, NY, the D&H Canal Historical Society in High Falls, NY, and the Sullivan County D&H Canal Park and Museum in Phillipspor, NY inspired me to dig out the file created in May 1975 and update it. That update grew into this expansion and research effort and resulting document. I thank the various members and officers of those societies for urging me on and for the support and encouragement of my wife Elaine. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the editing and proofreading skills applied by Linda Barth, editor of American Canals.

In the last thirty years, the family involvement in canals has increased. As a family of four, we have taken a narrow boat canal tour in England with the Canal Society of New Jersey. We have ridden the entire length of the Erie Canal and portions of its lateral canals. Most recently, we have experienced glorious voyages on the Rideau Canal in Ontario and the Augusta Canal in Georgia. We are members of three canal historical groups: the Canal Society of NJ, which I served as a director; the American Canal Society; and the D&H Canal Society, of which I am a life member. As a member of the Montville Historic Preservation Review Commission, I inventoried and surveyed all the former Morris Canal properties in the township in preparation for and in fulfillment of placing all 80 properties on the local historic district zoning overlay. Working with our township committee and mayor, we restored over a mile of the Morris Canal in the town with a developer financing the work in exchange for using the canal prism as a linear water runoff recharge basin. Work on restoring and providing access to two of the Montville canal inclined planes, a project started years ago, is now accelerating with other volunteers taking up the hard at work.

We participate and volunteer at the Morris Canal Town Waterloo Canal Days and make presentations to civic groups on the wonders of the Morris Canal inclined planes. All of this activity and the talent and skill of countless volunteers in the state and local canal societies has resulted in a reversal of the destruction of historic

AN INTERESTING TIDBIT FROM BILL TROUT

Just came across this, looks like modern American politics:

During the reign of Spain’s Charles II (“The Mad”), 1665-1700, a company of Dutch contractors offered to make the Manzanares River navigable up to Madrid.

“The council of Castile took this proposal into their serious consideration, and after maturely weighing it pronounced the singular decision, ‘That if it had pleased God that these two rivers should have been navigable, He would not have wanted human assistance to have made them such; but that, as He has not done it, it is plain He did not think it proper that it should be done. To attempt it, therefore, would be to violate the decrees of His providence, and to mend the imperfections which He designedly left in His works.’”

Cape Cod Canal Centennial this summer
Celebration plans underway for the Cape Cod Canal Centennial April 26-August 3, 2014
www.capecodtoday.com

The Cape Cod Canal is getting ready for a big celebration. This summer, the canal that is an important part of life in Cape Cod will celebrate its 100th anniversary of service with food, festival, and plenty of family fun. A new website for the festival has been launched at www.capecodcanalcentennial.org to provide complete up-to-date information about the celebration.

“We are already planning for the big celebration in the summer of 2014,” said Rear Admiral Rick Gurnon, chair of the organizing committee. “This is going to be a great celebration honoring the canal and the important contributions it has made to life in Cape Cod.”

For nearly 100 years, the Cape Cod Canal has been an important part of Massachusetts living. More than 20,000 ships pass through the canal every year and more than three million people from all over the area visit the canal for recreational fun, including biking, hiking, and fishing. It is also an important part of naval engineering history.

“It is the widest sea-level canal without locks in the world,” Rear Admiral Gurnon said. “The canal is a true feat of 20th-century engineering.”

Among the many events highlighting the celebration will be the sailing of historic tall ships; exciting tug boat races; traditional New England food, and, of course, plenty of family fun. There will be scenic train rides that travel across the canal on the nation’s second largest vertical lift bridge.

“We are planning a parade of lights, the sailing of the tall ship Morgan, and even a fun road race and walk that will be limited to the first 300 people,” Rear Admiral Gurnon said. “There are plenty of opportunities for sponsors to be part of this event. Business sponsors are part and parcel of this spectacular event, and we’re confident they will see the value in coming aboard to share in the celebration.”

He also recommends that travelers and volunteers save the date on their calendar now for what is guaranteed to be one of the best Cape Cod events ever.

“We are going to have a great time at the Cape Cod Canal Centennial,” Rear Admiral Gurnon said. “You definitely don’t want to miss this great celebration.”

For more information about the Cape Cod Canal Centennial, including currently available sponsorship opportunities, please visit the event website at www.capecodcanalcentennial.org.
ROCHESTER’S MARY JEMISON BOAT RETIRED

ROCHESTER, NY. Corn Hill Navigation’s Board of Directors has announced that it is retiring the historic Mary Jemison boat in downtown Rochester after eight seasons of service on the Erie Canal and its Genesee River Extension. Approximately 60,000 passengers from the Rochester region and around the world have discovered and enjoyed the Erie Canal on the Mary Jemison since her 2005 launch.

Upon consideration of the cost of ongoing maintenance of the aging historic vessel that will be required on an annual basis in the years to come, the board determined that it would be in the best interest of the community and the organization to invest time and resources into securing a newer vessel that can further the goal of enhancing the nonprofit’s educational, cultural, and recreational programming.

Corn Hill Navigation founder and Honorary Commodore Ted Curtis commented that “this is the appropriate time to retire the Mary, and the right thing to do for a beautiful and much beloved historic vessel, which has been in active service for nearly a century, and in recent years has helped reignite interest in America’s legendary Erie Canal as well as being a catalyst in attracting the public to downtown Rochester’s waterfront.”

During her time with Corn Hill Navigation, the Mary Jemison has provided field studies for approximately 10,000 students, including most of the 4th graders from the Rochester City School District. Passengers of all ages have enjoyed afternoon cruises, lunch and dinner cruises, specialty cruises such as wine tastings, live theater, lectures and July 4th fireworks cruises.

Board members, staff, and volunteers have begun planning for another boat to join the Sam Patch packet boat and ensure a downtown presence in time for the 2014 season. Members of the public who may know of USCG-inspected boats available for immediate sale or rental are encouraged to contact Corn Hill Navigation at www.samandmary.org or 585-662-5748.

WATSONTOWN, PA, CANAL BOAT PAVILION IN MEMORY OF BOB KEINTZ

By Ryn Agnew; photos courtesy of the Pennsylvania Canal Society

Through the hard work of a dedicated group of volunteers and the financial support of numerous individuals and organizations, the Watsontown Canal Boat Pavilion, envisioned as a tribute to Bob Keintz, former president and vice-president of the Pennsylvania Canal Society (PCS), evolved last spring and summer from a concept to a reality.

Designed to replicate the portion of the footprint of a post-1851 canal boat from the bow to the end of the cabin, the pavilion will eventually recreate the full outline of such a boat when the construction of an adjacent garden is completed.

To date, the wooden pavilion structure has been constructed and stained, the concrete floor and adjacent sidewalk have been created, and four picnic tables have been constructed and installed by an Eagle Scout candidate.

The site is already used on a daily basis by both local residents and visitors and is quickly becoming a destination for special events. Upon the final completion of all applicable inspections and approvals, the structure will be turned over to the Borough of Watsontown for ownership and maintenance.

Project construction was funded by a number of individuals and organizations, including $2,000 provided by PCS. The society’s early pledge and donation of funds served as both an endorsement of the project and stimulus for other (continued on page sixteen)
project donors. This project likely would not have succeeded without the society’s early support.

Interpretive and donor acknowledgment signs are now in the design phase for planned installation in 2014. A deliberate effort is being made to create sign displays that will inform casual visitors at a basic level while also providing additional resources for further learning by more advanced and engaged visitors. A key goal of this project is to foster an appreciation of the Commonwealth’s canal heritage and advocate for the interpretation and preservation of those canal remnants that still remain.

A formal dedication of the pavilion will be held when the garden and signage are in place. An announcement of that event will be forwarded to all project donors. A tentative target date of fall 2014 is being pursued.

The Watontown Canal Boat Pavilion project committee is extremely grateful for the substantial and ongoing support of the PCS and its many members. Those wishing to support the next phases of this project may do so by sending donations to: Warrior Run Community Corporation, Attn: Pavilion Fund, 4800 Susquehanna Trail, Turbotville, PA 17772-8769

For more information about this project, please contact Ryn Agnew at rynagew@comcast.net or by phone at 570-428-5528.

GOING UP! A BRIDGE MAKES WAY FOR BIGGER SHIPS
By Kate Ascher, New York Times, March 21, 2014

When it opened in 1931, the Bayonne Bridge—with its parabolic arch connecting Staten Island, N.Y. with Bayonne, N.J.—was an engineering marvel, boasting the longest unsupported span of any steel arch bridge in the world. But the height of its roadway, at 151 feet above the Kill Van Kull waterway, is increasingly insufficient for the large container ships now calling at the container ports of Staten Island and New Jersey.

To ensure continued access for these ships, and for the even bigger ones likely to arrive after the opening of an expanded Panama Canal next year, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey is undertaking a $1.3 billion dollar project to raise the roadway of the bridge by 64 feet, to a height of 215 feet above the water. While the project itself is all but unprecedented in bridge engineering, the trickiest part lies in completing the construction while the bridge remains open to traffic.

How is it possible to increase the height of a bridge without closing it to cars and trucks? The answer lies in careful staging. First, the traffic will be shifted to the western side of the bridge’s roadway, with one lane going in each direction. The roadway and deck on the eastern side then can be removed, and the current concrete piers can be replaced with taller supports. A rolling gantry crane will lift and cantilever new segments of road into place to create a second and higher two-lane roadway.

With traffic diverted to this new roadway, by 2015, if things go according to plan, the old roadway and deck can be removed—allowing bigger ships to use the channel even before the new bridge is fully complete. Over the following two years, two additional 12-foot-wide lanes, as well as medians, shoulders, and a shared-use path for pedestrians and cyclists, will be constructed.

Bridge closings will be limited to overnight hours, when traffic is light, and to occasional weekends; eight are planned in 2014. That seems a small price to pay for a better and more functional bridge, let alone one that allows a port that handles more than $200 billion in freight annually to remain competitive.

See more on pages 17 and 18.

Kate Ascher is the author of the newly published The Way to Go: Moving by Sea, Land, and Air (The Penguin Press).
**How and Why They Are Raising the Bayonne Bridge Roadway**

**The right solution**

To accommodate increasingly larger vessels calling at the container ports located in New Jersey and Staten Island, the Port Authority looked at a number of options, including replacing the bridge entirely or constructing a tunnel in its place. But raising the roadway 64 feet within the confines of the classic arch structure, as shown below, was deemed the best approach.

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**Bigger and taller**

Ships capable of passing through the current Panama Canal are referred to as Panamax ships. With the opening of the expanded Panama Canal in 2015, larger ships, commonly called Post Panamax, will use the canal; many are too large to fit under the bridge’s existing roadway.

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<th>Maximum dimensions of ships using the Panama Canal</th>
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<tr>
<td>Width: 106 feet</td>
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<td>Length: 965 feet</td>
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<td>Draft: 39.5 feet</td>
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Raising the approaches
First, new piers are built. Then, a rolling gantry crane atop the piers will transport and install precast segments of roadway, alternating placement of the new segments on each side of individual piers for balance. The gantry then will be rolled forward to repeat the process.

Raising the bridge roadway
While the bridge is closed to traffic, a mobile crane will lift new floor beams into place above the existing roadway and attach them to the arch with suspender ropes. Temporary ropes will attach floor beams of the existing road to the new beams for support.

Steel stringers will then be attached to the new floor beams, building the understructure of the roadway. Once the steel work is complete, a concrete deck will be poured on top.

A better roadway
In addition to allowing larger ships to pass below, the new roadway will provide other benefits. Drivers will find wider lanes, while pedestrians and bikers will get a new shared-use path.

The four 10-foot-wide lanes have no shoulders or median. Shared-use path on the west side is six feet

Lanes grow to 12 feet with 4’9” shoulders. The path, now 12 feet wide, moves to the east side of the bridge.
April 12—Middlesex Canal Assn Spring Bike Tour. Meet 9:30AM at North Station (commuter rail) and take our bicycles on the 10AM train to Lowell. Riders meeting the group at Lowell meet at the train station at 10:40. This year an early group will take the 8:00AM train from North Station to allow more time in Lowell and breakfast at the historic Owl Diner (http://www.owldiner.com, aka the Four Sisters). Route visits the Pawtucket and other Lowell canals, the river walk, Francis Gate, and then Middlesex Canal remnants in Chelmsford. Lunch at Route 3A mini-mall in Billerica. Quick visit to Canal Museum, then on to Boston. A long day of exploration (35 miles end-to-end) but sunset is late. (Riders can board northbound trains at other stations or catch southbound trains at 1:07 or 3:14PM to return to Boston early. Complete Lowell line schedules can be downloaded at www.umber.net. Participants are responsible for one-way train fare [$8.75 from Boston to Lowell]. For changes or updates, see http://middlesexcanal.org. Leaders Bill Kuttner (617-241-9383) & Dick Bauer (857-540-6293).

Walks along the Morris and the Delaware & Raritan Canals in New Jersey. Various weekends. For information see www.canalsocietynj.org/upcoming_canal_walks_in_2014.pdf


May 2-4, 2014—Canal Society of NY State spring tour, will explore the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal; Headquarters: Hagerstown MD. www.newyorkcanals.org

May 3—SIA, Southern & Northern New England Chapters. Joint tour of the Middlesex Canal, North Billericia to Woburn, MA; held in conjunction with the Middlesex Canal Association. 9:30 AM at the Middlesex Canal Museum, 71 Faulkner St, North Billerica, Mass. (See directions to the museum, above.) Cost: $10 per person, includes bus transportation along the canal route to Woburn. See <http://nec-sia.org/> for more information.

May 4—Middlesex Canal Association Spring Meeting. 1 PM. Ken Williamson on "Inclined to Succeed: The South Hadley Canal." for may years, has researched and written about the South Hadley Canal. With its Inclined Plane, the SHC was one of the most technologically ambitious enterprises attempted in the young United States; Loammi Baldwin visited the site in the Spring of 1994, while it was still under construction.


July 24-August 3—Cape Cod Canal Centennial Celebration, MA. Weeklong celebration filled with maritime-themed events, historical exhibits, tall ships, tugboat parade, children’s activities along the canal, opening gala and a grand ball; tour of the Charles W. Morgan, the last surviving wooden whaling ship. See www.capecodcanalcentennial.org.


September 1-4, 2014 - 2014 World Canals Conference, Navigli Lombardi, Milan, Italy

September 12-14 - Canal Society of Indiana Fall Tour, Fort Wayne, IN area, Wabash & Erie Canal. indcanal@aol.com

The theme “Lehigh Canal” first attracted me to this volume. While unquestionably a historical novel about a canal, it does not achieve the literary heights of Walter D. Edmonds’ historical trilogy, including the famous novels Erie Water and Rome Haul about the Black River and Erie canals.

Kelly’s Chance is about a canal family and specifically the younger of two daughters, Kelly McGregor. Her older sister eloped with a canal boatman, leaving Kelly alone to work for her tyrannical father, a canal boat captain on the Lehigh Canal.

The author exposes the danger, drudgery, and boredom of the boatmen’s lifestyle. Oddly, the name or number of the boat is never revealed, so we do not know that it is McGregor’s boat or that of the Lehigh Navigation. The McGregors provisioned their boat at a canal store at Walnutport on their voyages between Easton and Mauch Chunk. There, Kelly struck up a friendship with the young male proprietor. Kelly had a secret talent for drawing. Her father barely tolerated this “waste of time” and diversion from Kelly’s duties on the boat and towpath, mostly tending the family’s two mules, Herman and Hector.

Kelly’s mother’s illness further added to Kelly’s workload and increased her despondency at the prospect of a future life on the canal that was debilitating her mother. The plot, while characteristic of this author, is simple and easy to follow. It holds one’s attention and moves rapidly through a series of events that advance the story line. I will not detail the plot further, except to say that all ends well.

Kelly’s Chance is a revealing title, indicative of Kelly’s chance to escape the canal boat, pursue her art, and realize a happy married life near, but not on the canal. The conclusion of this story leads to two sequels, creating a trilogy collectively titled “Brides of the Lehigh Canal.”

One or two cautions are appropriate to the canal historians and researchers. This is a romance novel, largely directed at ladies aged pre-teen to geriatric. Along with other novels by the author on Amish life, this book has a religious tone throughout. While the canal place names are authentic (even Glendon Iron Works creeps into the plot) and the author did well in researching her subject, the Lehigh Canal purist may detect some stretches of reality. The cover picture of a canal boat looks more Ohio than Pennsylvania and Kelly having her own room and privacy on the boat was unlikely. This is, after all, fiction.

Author Brunstetter’s husband was born and grew up in Easton. Together they have hiked the towpath and ridden on the Lehigh Canal, presumably at Hugh Moore Park. Though they currently live in Washington State, they seem at home with their subject. Brunstetter has authored over thirty works of romance novels, children’s books, poetry, puppet scripts, and nonfiction on Amish lifestyle and cookbooks.

Kelly’s Chance is the first in the trilogy as “Book One” in Brides of the Lehigh Canal. and was published (Barbour Publishing www.barbourbooks.com ISBN 978-1-60260-890-0) in paperback (218 pages) in 2004. The next sequel is Betsey’s Return. The books in the Lehigh Canal series are available from the author, who will autograph copies on request. Brunstetter has a website www.wandabrunstetter.com and you can reach her at wanda@wandabrunstetter.com to order books and for current prices. A search of Amazon reveals that the asking price for these books in that market is between $5.00 to $10.00.