



AmericanCanals

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Dedicated to Historic Canal Research, Preservation and Parks

Fall 2017

From the President

By David G. Barber

In September I attended the 30th World Canals Conference in Syracuse, N.Y. The conference commemorated the 200th anniversary of the beginning of construction of the Erie Canal. The Erie's ground breaking was in nearby Rome, NY. The conference offered the usual opportunity to network with others interested in canals, to hear presentations on canals around the world, and to visit nearby places along the canals of New York. We also got to hear that New York State has designated the Erie Canalway from Buffalo to Albany and bikeways from Albany to New York City and from Albany to Rouses Point at the Canadian border as the 750 mile long Empire Trail System and will spend \$200 million by the end of 2020 to complete it. Most impressive.

However, what most impressed me was the keynote talk by John Robinson just before lunch on the

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The dry dock at the Chittenango Landing Canal Boat Museum is one of many canal features that were visited by World Canals Conference participants. Coverage of the WCC starts on page 8. Photo by Chris Holdsworth

American Canals

BULLETIN OF THE
AMERICAN CANAL SOCIETY

Managing Editor: Steve Dean
Contributing Editor: David G. Barber

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For memberships, subscriptions, change of address, and other business matters: c/o Charles W. Derr, 117 Main Street, Freemansburg, PA 18017; deruls@aol.com; 610-691-0956.

For CANAL CALENDAR items and news of local, state, and regional canal societies: c/o Steve Dean, PO Box 132, Saint Leonard MD 20685; 301-904-9068; 184.5_miles@comcast.net

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.

An annual subscription to *American Canals* is automatic with ACS membership. Regular Single Membership, \$25; Dual Membership, \$35; Sustaining (no change) \$35; Patron, \$50; Life Membership \$500.00.

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Other Publications: *The Best from American Canals; American Canal Guides*, William E. Trout III, editor and publisher

DEADLINE: Material for our next issue must be on the editor's desk no later than September 15, 2017. Send to Steve Dean, PO Box 132, Saint Leonard MD 20685, Editor, American Canals; 301-904-9068; 184.5_miles@comcast.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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Officers:

President: David G. Barber, 16 Ballou Road, Hopedale, MA 01747-1833; 508-478-4918; dgbarber@cs.com; Director; Chairman, American Canal Survey Committee.

Vice President: Robert Sears, 248 Tower Drive, Toronto, ON M1R 3R1, Canada; 416-285-7254; rwsears88@gmail.com.

Recording Secretary: Michael E. Morthorst, 6914 Ohio Ave., Cincinnati, OH, 45236-3506; 513-791-6481; gongoozler@fuse.net; Director.

Membership Secretary/Treasurer: Charles Derr, 117 Main Street, Freemansburg, PA 18017; 610-691-0956; deruls@aol.com; Director; Member Canal Engineering, Operations & Maintenance Committee.

Directors:

Paul Bartczak, 9954 New Oregon Rd, Eden, NY 14057-9711; 716-992-9069; pjbartczak@earthlink.net; Director.

Robert H. Barth, 214 N. Bridge St., Somerville, NJ 08876-1637; 908-722-7428; bbarth321@aol.com; Director.

Steve Dean, PO Box 132, Saint Leonard, MD 20685; 301-904-9068; 184.5_miles@comcast.net; Editor *American Canals*.

Martha Capwell Fox, 2750 Hugh Moore Park Road, Easton, PA 18042; 610-923-3548 ext. 237; archives@delawareandlehigh.org; Director.

George Hume, #513-39 Parliament Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5A 4R2; 416-214-9331, george.hume@rogers.com; Director.

David M. Johnson, 9211 Wadsworth Drive, Bethesda, MD 20817; 301-530-7473; dave9211@verizon.net; Director; Member, Canal Liaison Committee.

John M. Lamb, 1109 Garfield Street, Lockport, IL 60441; 815-838-7316, 815-478-2341 ex. 10; Director; Chair, Canal Engineering, Maintenance & Operations Committee.

Dan McCain, 3198 North 700 West, Delphi, IN 46923; 765-412-4308; dan.mccain@gmail.com; Director.

Michael Riley, 38 Green Street, Port Byron, NY 13140; 315-224-1716; mriley20@twcny.rr.com; Director.

Robert Schmidt, 5908 Chase Creek Court, Fort Wayne, IN 46804; 260-432-0279; indcanal@aol.com; Director; Chairman, Nominating Committee; Member, Canal Engineering, Maintenance & Operations Committee.

Roger Squires, 46 Elephant Lane, Rotherhithe, London SE16 4JD England; 020 7232 0987; rogersquires@btinternet.com; Director for the U.K.

William Trout III, Virginia Canals & Navigations Society, 3806 S. Amherst Hwy, Madison Heights, VA 24572; 252-301-1747; wetrout@mindspring.com; Director.

Larry Turner, 15091 Portage Street, Lot #34, Doylestown, OH 44230; 330-658-8344; towpathturner@aol.com. Director.

Terry K. Woods, 6939 Eastham Circle, Canton OH 44708; 330-832-4621; woodscanal@ssnet.com; Director; Chair, Parks Committee; Member, Canal Archaeology Committee, Canal Boat Committee, Canal Engineering, Maintenance & Operations Committee; woodscanalone@aol.com

Directors Emeritus:

William J. McKelvey, Jr., 103 Dogwood Drive, Berkeley Heights, NJ 07922; wjmckelvey@hotmail.com; 908-464-9335

Lance Metz, 37 N West St, Allentown, PA 18102-4218 lancemetz@icloud.com

Committees:

ACS Sales, Peter Walker, 24 Northview Terrace, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009 ptgwalker@gmail.com 973-744-2380 Chairman ACS Sales Committee

Canal Archaeology, Mark Newell, chair, Georgia Archaeological Institute, PO Box 984, Augusta, GA 30901

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American Canals Indexes Updated

Thanks to some hard work by David Barber, the index for *American Canals* is now updated to reflect the full 45 year history, from 1972 to 2016. Separate indexes allow searching by article, author and photographs. The indexes are available at the following link: www.americancanals.org/AC%20Indexes/AC_Indexes.htm

Additionally, past issues of *American Canals* through 2014 are now available. They can be found at: www.americancanals.org/AC_Issues/American_Canals.htm

American Canal Society Sales

The Society has the following items for sale:

Best from American Canals #2	published 1984	\$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
American Canal Guide #1: West Coast	published 1974	\$1
American Canal Guide #2: South, NC to FL	published 1975	\$2
American Canal Guide #3: Lower MS & Gulf	published 1979	\$3
American Canal Guide #4: WV, KY, Ohio River (Photocopy)	published 1988	\$3
American Canal Guide #5: DE, MD, VA	published 1992	\$3
20 year American Canals Index 1972-1992	published 1992	\$3
Canal Boat Construction Index (12 pages)	published 1992	\$2
Picture-Journey Along the Penn. Main Line Canal	published 1993	\$10
ACS Burgee (blue on white cloth)		\$15
ACS cloth sew on patch (2" x 3" red, white & blue)		\$3

Special Offers – while stocks last

Back issues of American Canals - free to members – enquire for a list of available copies and mailing cost.

An ACS bumper sticker (“Support Your Local Canal” or “Restore Your Local Canal”) will be sent **free** with each order

Shipping and handling: Orders can also be sent by mail with a check payable to American Canal Society to 24 Northview Terrace, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. **Include \$3 postage for first item and \$1 for each additional item** for Media Mail within USA. Enquire for other destinations and expedited delivery. Allow for your order to take up to 4 weeks to dispatch. Email Sales.AmericanCanals@gmail.com for further information.

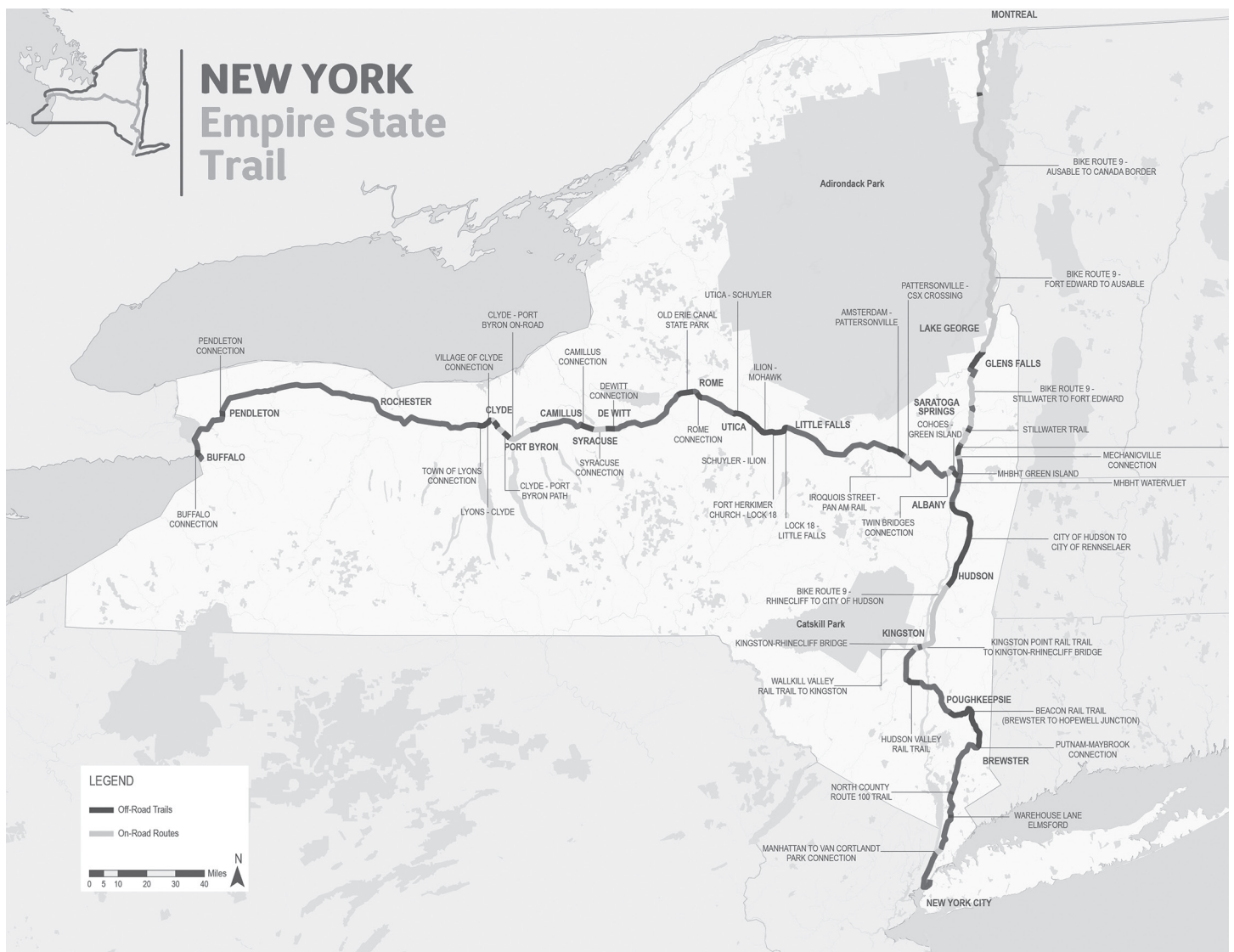
From the President – continued from p.1

first day. John was born with significant limitations in all four of his limbs. Yet, he has graduated from Syracuse University and developed a successful sales career. Despite his disabilities, John has bicycled the 373 miles across New York State from Buffalo to Albany on the Erie Canalway five times. I found John’s book, *Get Off Your Knees*, to be most inspiring and informative. It is available for a small cost from Amazon.

John and two other speakers made the point that about 7 percent of people are disabled in some way and that they are included in about 20 percent of families. These families want to do things together. Bicy-

cles exist in many forms allowing all to cycle. What is needed is businesses serving the market and trails to cycle on. Serving the combined market brings expanded growth to local businesses and greater support to canal towpaths and rail trails. Including these concerns in our planning is a win-win situation for all.

Get Off Your Knees – John Robinson
Syracuse University Press
www.syracuseuniversitypress.syr.edu/
ISBN 978-0815609223



Empire State Trail map. www.hudsongreenway.ny.gov/

AMERICAN CANAL SOCIETY

Board of Directors Meeting

Marriott Syracuse Hotel

Syracuse, New York

24 September 2017

Minutes

The meeting was held prior to the opening of the thirtieth World Canals Conference.

Board members in attendance: David Barber, presiding; Paul Bartczak, Bob Barth, Martha Capwell Fox, William Gerber, George Hume, David Johnson, Mike Riley, Robert Sears, Roger Squires, William Trout, and Larry Turner.

Board members absent: Steve Dean, Charles Derr, John Lamb, Dan McCain, Michael Morthorst, Robert Schmidt, and Terry Woods.

Others in attendance: Kay Bartczak, Bill Holdsworth, Rod Mackler, and David Pearce,

The president called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Minutes: The minutes of the board meeting held at Massillon, Ohio on 13 May, 2016 were reviewed. On the motion of Bill Gerber, seconded by Bob Barth, the minutes were approved unanimously without amendment.

Treasurer's Report: Charles Derr being absent, the treasurer's report was not presented. The financial statement subsequently submitted is attached.

Director and Officers: The president announced that all of the incumbent directors whose terms are expiring this year have agreed to be on the ballot for re-election.

On the motion of Roger Squires, seconded by Bob Sears, the board unanimously elected the following officers for 2017-18:

President — David Barber

Vice President — Robert Sears

Secretary/Treasurer — Charles Derr

Recording Secretary — Michael Morthorst

President's Report: President Barber reported on his tour of the enlarged Panama Canal, and on a hike on the Delaware Canal.

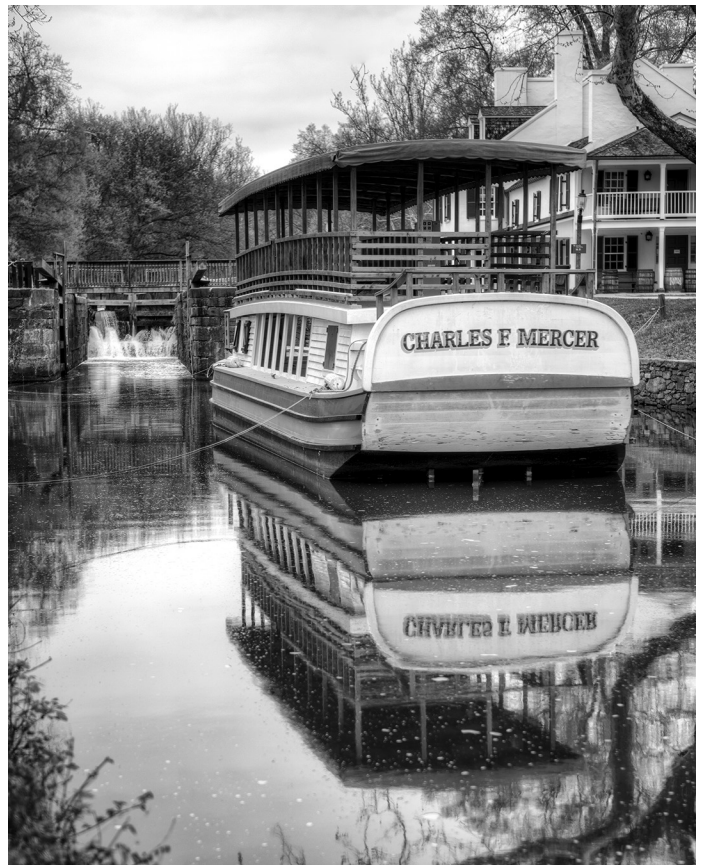
Committee Reports: There were no reports from any of the standing committees.

Web site: President Barber reported that all issues of American Canals through Vol. 43 (2014) are now on-line, and the index has been updated through Vol. 45 (2016).

Other Business:

- a. Bob Barth reported that the remains of a Morris Canal section boat that were discovered at Sandy Hook, New Jersey after a hurricane have been donated to Canal Society of New Jersey (CSNJ) and removed to Waterloo Village.

- b. Bill Holdsworth, president of the C&O Canal Association, presented a large, framed photograph, which had been donated to C&OCA, of boats on the Delaware & Raritan Canal to Bob Barth for the CSNJ's museum at Waterloo Village.
- c. Bob Sears announced that a memorial to 137 workers who died during construction of the Welland Canal will be dedicated on 12 November.
- d. Larry Turner described several problems on the Ohio & Erie Canal, including leakage at Buckeye Lake, which has lowered the water level of the lake, and a sewer project in Akron that is affecting the canal park there.
- e. Mike Riley reported that the transfer of the New York Canal System from the Thruway Authority to the Power Authority has not gone without problems. However, the opening of the CSNYS Port Byron Heritage Park has been very successful: many people are stopping to visit.
- f. Paul Bartczak described the restoration project at the five-lock flight at Lockport, and the Durham boat replica in use there.
- g. Martha Capwell Fox reported that the National Canal Museum at Easton, Pa. has merged with the Delaware & Lehigh Nat'l Heritage Corridor, and that its Smithsonian affiliation has been expanded to include the entire corridor. She described the 4th-grade school programs they operate at the museum, and the cooperative programs in Freemansburg.
- h. Bill Holdsworth described the groundbreaking for the restoration of the C&O Canal Conococheague Aqueduct at Williamsport, Md., on which construction work has begun. When completed, the Williamsport interpretive area will feature both a watered aqueduct and a working lock for boat rides.
- i. Rod Mackler, vice-president of C&OCA, reported on the restoration of locks in the District of Columbia section of the C&O Canal. Local businesses and the D. C. government are raising funds for a new boat to replace the former vessel (the Georgetown), which has been scrapped; they hope that delivery of a new boat can coincide with completion of the lock repairs in 2019. (Lock repairs in the Great Falls, Md., area will keep the packet boat Mercer idle in 2018, also.)



*Charles F. Mercer at C&O Canal Lock 20, Great Falls Tavern –
Photo by Steve Dean*

2017 World Canals Conference

Syracuse, N.Y.

By Rod Mackler

Canal societies from the United States were well-represented at the 30th annual World Canals Conference, hosted this year by the New York State Canal Corporation and the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, Sept. 24 to 28. Participants traveled from all directions to Syracuse, in central upstate New York, where three of the four canals of the New York State Canals system converge.



*Marriott Syracuse Downtown, the principle conference venue.
Photo by Rod Mackler*

The city of Syracuse welcomed us the day before the conference opened, with music, food trucks, boat tours, beer tasting, and exhibits on the Inner Harbor, a branch of Lake Onondaga. The major museums in town had free admission, including the Erie Canal Museum, built around the sole remaining weigh lock on the canal and probably the only one extant in North America. The original Erie Canal ran through the center of Syracuse, and here the weight of loaded barges was compared with the empty weight of record as measured at the beginning of each season. There is a reproduction canal boat in the lock, and exhibitions throughout the building.

Sunday also saw meetings of Inland Waterways International, which chooses the site of the World Canals Conference, and the American Canals Society.

At the latter, C&O Canal Association president Bill Holdsworth presented Bob Barth with a framed photo of the Delaware & Raritan Canal for the Canal Society of New Jersey museum in Waterloo.

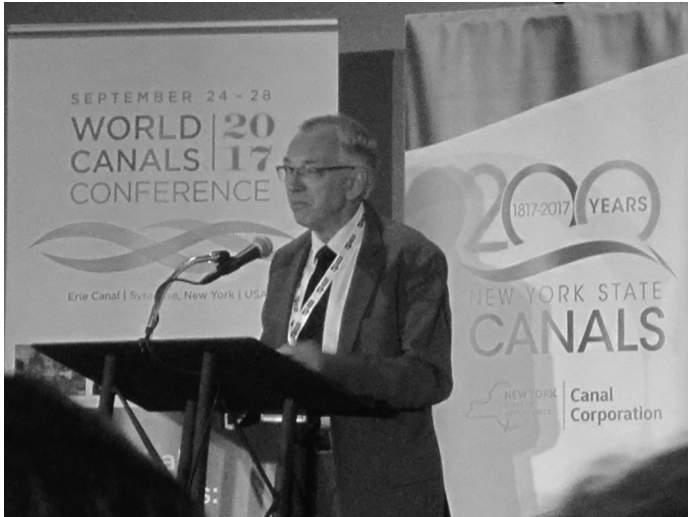
The principle venue for the conference was the Marriott Syracuse Downtown. Opened as the Syracuse Hotel in 1924, it was extensively restored and remodeled for Marriott in 2014–2016, at a cost of \$76 million. What was a 600-room classic hotel now has half that number of rooms, each twice as large and with modern bathrooms and plenty of electrical hook-ups. The original wooden room doors have been retained, the ballroom and lobby have been lovingly restored, and the paneling in the efficient elevators is a



The weigh lock in Syracuse. Photo by Chris Holdsworth

beautiful inlay of oak and walnut. The hotel manager described the restoration process over dinner on Monday evening.

The schedule of the conference followed a familiar format: we had lectures in the morning, a buffet lunch with speakers, then hopped on buses for field trips, to see the region's historic and working canals. In the hallway, exhibitors extolled the services of engineering companies, boat-hire firms, national parks from the U.S., Canada and Ireland, and the Archives of the State of New York, among others.



Inland Waterways International President David Edwards-May opening the conference. Photo by Rod Mackler

All told, there were about 330 delegates from a dozen countries on three continents. The first day of lectures was a plenary session focusing on New York's canals, and, above all, on the Erie Canal. There were actually three Erie Canals. The first, "Clinton's Ditch," was started exactly two hundred years ago, in 1817, from the Hudson at Albany 363 miles to Lake Erie at Buffalo, with 83 lift locks. This initial canal was a single channel 40 feet wide and 4 feet deep, with a towpath created from the earth removed from the canal prism. Governor DeWitt Clinton inaugurated the completed canal in 1825, pouring a cask of Lake Erie water into New York Harbor.

The canal reduced shipping costs by as much as 90 percent and was an immediate commercial success, spurring a mania for canal building in the United States, and a demand for an "expanded canal" with greater capacity in New York. The second Erie Canal was begun in 1834, with the cut widened to 70 feet

and deepened to 7 feet. The course was straightened, aqueducts over rivers were added, and parallel lock chambers built to allow boats to move in both directions at the same time.

The third canal was driven by a change in technology as well as a need for greater capacity to compete better with the railroads. Steam power was replacing mules. From 1906 to 1918, rivers such as the Mohawk and Seneca were dammed, locks became deeper and fewer, and the canal was further shortened. Syracuse and Rochester were bypassed. This version, the "New York State Barge Canal," is the backbone of the system now operated by the New York State Canal Corporation. Additional lateral canals were built. The Champlain Canal connects the Hudson River and the Erie Canal with Lake Champlain and, via the Richelieu River, to the St. Lawrence River near Montreal. The Oswego Canal connects the Erie Canal near Syracuse to Lake Ontario and Toronto. And the Cayuga-Seneca Canal connects the Erie Canal to two of the large Finger Lakes.

On Tuesday and Wednesday mornings, we had break-out sessions, necessitating difficult decisions among competing interesting lectures. These included subjects as diverse as public art on canals, marketing and tourism, engineering, green technologies, old boats, and using canal restoration as job skills training.

For our afternoon field trips each day, two buses went east, two went west and two went north. The East trip took us to the Chittenango Landing Canal



Fort Stanwix. Photo by Chris Holdsworth

Boat Museum, on the expanded Erie Canal. Christine O’Neil, the executive director and her colleagues did an excellent job of interpreting the site, in the hometown of L. Frank Baum, of Oz fame. We continued to Rome, where the first spade was turned on July 4, 1817. The actual site is buried under a defunct factory in downtown Rome. Also in Rome, we toured Fort Stanwix National Monument, which was built for the French and Indian War, and saw service in the Revolution.

The West trip showcased the restored four-arch aqueduct over Nine Mile Creek, at the Camillus Erie Canal Park. This is an excellent example of volunteer effort and community involvement, led for more than 45 years by Dr. Dave Bebee and Liz Bebee. We also took a boat ride through the two-chamber locks at Seneca Falls, on the Cayuga-Seneca Canal. Seneca Falls was the site of the 1848 Women’s Rights Convention; we were reminded that it is also the centennial of women’s suffrage, as we were as we drove by the home of Elizabeth Cady Stanton. The last stop of the day was at the new Port Byron Old Erie Canal Heritage Park, which opened just a year ago, after more than 20 years of effort by Tom Grasso and the



Liz Beebe showing how the wooden trunk fits into the restored stone aqueduct on the Old Erie Canal over Nine Mile Creek at Camillus. Photo by Rod Mackler

Canal Society of New York State. The locks here had been lengthened in the 1880s to handle two boats at a time and there was a mechanism to pull boats into the chamber. Tom himself introduced us to the visitor center, mule barn, and restored canal tavern at this special rest stop on the Thruway.

Tom Grasso is president emeritus of the Canal Society of New York State. He was the long-time president of the CSNYS and president of Inland Waterways International. He was principle organizer of the two World Canals Conferences held in Rochester New York, in 2000 and 2010. He worked tirelessly to open the rest stop at Port Byron on the New York Thruway, making it accessible both from the tollway and to local roads. He headed the stabilization and restoration of Lock 52 of the Old Erie Canal and of the Erie House tavern. Finally, he stimulated the construc-

tion of the new visitor center pictured here and coordinated the exhibits to interpret what was once a thriving canal community. Left photo – Tom explains the functioning and restoration of the extended Lock 52 of the Old Erie Canal at Port Byron, New York. It is now a rest stop on the New York Thruway.

Right photo – Touring extended Lock 52 of the Old Erie Canal at Port Byron.

Photos by Rod Mackler



For the North trip, we took a cruise on the Oswego Canal, from the town of Oswego on Lake Ontario, south to the locks at Fulton. From the boat, we saw three bald eagles, several blue herons and egrets, and osprey nests. On the way to the boat, we toured the shops for one maintenance section of the Erie Canal, talking to the carpenters, machinists, and other experts who make the countless parts that comprise a functioning canal system. Their range of tools was most impressive, including a saw used to cut rounded gate quoins.

On Wednesday night, we had dinner at Papermill Island, at the village of Baldwinsville, on Lock 24 of the modern Erie Canal. We enjoyed an “upstate cook-out” with pulled pork, Syracuse salt potatoes, Utica greens, corn on the cob, craft beers, Finger Lakes wines and good company. Glass blowers on the Glass-Barge from the Corning Museum of Glass, the replica 1862 canal schooner *Lois McClure*, and the classic tugboat *Seneca* joined us there.



New York State Canal Corporation tug Seneca.

Photo by Rod Mackler

On Thursday morning, the conference closed with a “passing of the water.” The final plenary was held in the electric company building. Previously called Niagara Hudson and Niagara Mohawk (both describing the reach of the Erie Canal), the Art Deco masterpiece is now owned by British energy conglomerate National Grid, one of the prime financial underwriters of the conference. In generational terms, the torch was passed to a panel of young professional women, who detailed their work on the canal and their dreams for

it. In more literal terms, a Corning glass cask of Erie Canal water was passed from this year’s hosts to next year’s – the Irish on the Shannon navigation. We are looking forward to World Canals Conference 2018 in Athlone, in the center of Ireland.

The conference organizers also provided the opportunity to visit other sites on the New York State Canal System, through pre- and post-conference tours. The pre-conference tour centered in Albany, at the eastern end of the Erie Canal, and featured a trip up the Champlain Canal to Lake Champlain. There was even a bit of underwater archaeology, as tour participants got to see some of the shipwrecks preserved in the cold water of Lake Champlain. A two-day bike ride along the Old Erie Canal from Rome to Syracuse was an optional add-on. The post-conference tour focused on the western end of the Erie Canal, including the Finger Lakes, the flight of five locks at Lockport, Niagara Falls, and the Canalside waterfront in Buffalo.



The former Niagara Mohawk, now National Grid, was the venue for the closing session. Photo by Chris Holdsworth

Triumph and Tragedy: The Welland Ship Canal

Upcoming Book

In conjunction with the Welland Canal Fallen Workers Memorial project, a new publication about the Welland Ship Canal – *Triumph and Tragedy: The Welland Ship Canal* – is currently being prepared for release early in 2018.

For almost two centuries the Welland Ship Canal has linked two of the Great Lakes, thus enabling ships from around the world to sail to the heartland of North America. Once completed, the present Ship Canal was viewed as an engineering marvel of the twentieth century, but there was a terrible cost paid in lives lost over its twenty-one-year period of construction, 1913-1935.

At more than 350 pages, the forthcoming book is illustrated with hundreds of never-before-published photographs from numerous public and private collections. Its release will mark the culmination of four-and-one-half years of detailed research by a special committee whose efforts have been rewarded with historical material from collections throughout Canada, the United States, and beyond. Included in the thousands of hours of research has been an extensive effort to locate the families of the fallen in order to permanently record their stories and preserve the memories, documents, and photographs about their ancestors and their work in building the Welland Ship Canal.

The book also pays tribute to the 137 workers whose lives were lost during the Canal's construction by featuring individual profiles of each casualty.

Triumph and Tragedy: The Welland Ship Canal will provide a unique insight into a man-made structure that has impacted Niagara like no other, however, the Welland Ship Canal is much more than concrete locks and 26 miles of waterway. This new book is especially a people's story about those labourers whose sweat and toil built the Canal, and those who sometimes died in its peacetime trenches because of accidents and mishaps. *Triumph and Tragedy* will provide a special understanding of the hardships and sacrifices of those who built it.

Dozens of articles and special features have been prepared by many of Niagara's most distinguished authors, historians, genealogists, curators, librarians, university professors, and canal authorities. As an example of the subject matter, it will include content from newly found research about the Welland Canal Construction Railway, Medical Services, labour issues, the Anglican Mission to workers, and much more. Through this special format of subject features, readers will gain a new understanding into many lesser-known aspects of the Welland Ship Canal and its construction.

The book is unique as a social history and study of industry in its style and content of documenting particular themes of the Canal's construction. It will also be an important addition to a number of excellent previous histories about the Welland Canal that have been published by other authors.

Triumph and Tragedy: The Welland Ship Canal will be published in full colour, hard cover, and will be available in 2018.

Order Forms and information can be downloaded at:

[www.stcatharines.ca/en/governin/
Fallen-Workers-Memorial.asp](http://www.stcatharines.ca/en/governin/Fallen-Workers-Memorial.asp)

Triumph and Tragedy is being released in a limited edition print run. Those considering purchasing a copy are advised to pre-order now in order to reserve a copy of the book.

Books may be ordered through the St. Catharines Museum at Lock 3. The Museum grounds will also be the future home of the Welland Canal Fallen Workers Memorial. For further information please contact the Museum at: 905.984.8880.

Triumph and Tragedy: The Welland Ship Canal has been made possible through the generous support of the Niagara Community Foundation, and Hilliard and Dawn Radford.

The C&O Canal Georgetown Plan

By Rod Mackler

On November 2, 2017 a public meeting was held for the **Georgetown Plan**, an ambitious project to re-imagine the first mile of the C&O Canal.

The plan is a joint effort by the C&O Canal National Historical Park and Georgetown Heritage, an off-shoot of the area's Business Improvement District (BID). James Corner Field Operations, the designer of New York's Highline and other urban parks, has been hired to design the plan. One thing that distinguishes this effort from other attempts to improve the canal is that it is well funded – Georgetown has \$3.5 million in its pocket from the District government and from the Georgetown merchants to finance improvements there. This includes funds for the current rebuilding of Locks 2 and 3 and for the future purchase of a new mule-drawn boat.

The public meeting was part of the process mandated by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and National Historic Preservation Act, which require public input to decisions that impact national parks and historic structures. The first step was “scoping,” gathering information on existing conditions; a public meeting on that stage was held June 14. The second step was developing conceptual alternatives – these were the ideas to which the public was introduced on Nov. 2 and on which the public was invited to comment by December 11. The next step will be to consult with other government, public sector, and individual actors to evaluate adverse effects on cultural resources and the environment. That will lead to an environmental assessment, a major document detailing impacts and mitigation strategies. There will be additional opportunities to comment at those stages.

Representatives from the Georgetown Heritage, the C&O Canal NHP, and the design firm introduced the November meeting. Participants examined displays highlighting potential changes in eight landscapes: the Zero Mile marker; along Rock Creek; at the canal's confluence with the creek; alongside the locks; in the grove of trees between the locks and Wisconsin Avenue; between the high walls in the industrial heart of canal; Market Square and the Fish Market; and, lastly, the Alexandria Aqueduct.

One of the signature achievements of the Georgetown Plan so far is the inclusion of the Zero Mile marker in the overall plan. The route from Lock 1 to the beginning of the canal next to Thompson's Boat House is poorly marked and difficult to negotiate. It is lost in a tangle of the Whitehurst Freeway and Rock Creek Parkway. Since the June meeting, Rock Creek Park has been brought into the process – the key to getting to the Zero Mile marker is through Rock Creek Park. Once one arrives at the Zero Mile, the shortcomings are many – a silted-in tide lock, crumbling walls in the basin of what was once the Port of Georgetown, deteriorating ruins of the dam that once impounded that basin, no visitor services, and overall lack of interpretation.

The other end of Georgetown's mile of the canal is the Alexandria Aqueduct. Even in its ruined state, the aqueduct area is a popular place to study, read, sunbathe, or just hang out. The Plan includes options is to clean up the ruins ruined structure, remove graffiti, install railings for safety, improve the link between the towpath and the Capital Crescent Trail, and perhaps build a trestle over the aqueduct to frame the view and remind the visitor of historic versions of the structure – aqueduct for boats, railway bridge, and roadway. The illustrations for proposed alternatives at this end also show a proposed boathouse above the aqueduct, a position the Association has opposed for decades.

In the center of the Georgetown stretch of the canal, the area around the old visitor center is to be completely redone. The Mule Yard is to be terraced and landscaped. Restrooms may be added to a kiosk selling tickets for the canal boat rides. The mule staging area may be moved across the canal. And the bust of Justice Douglass should be restored to its place of honor. The revitalized canal is seen as the centerpiece of a revitalized historic Georgetown.

For further information about this project, visit parkplanning.nps.gov/Georgetowncanalplan.

Yellow Creek Culvert

By Terry K. Woods

Although it doesn't have the variety and glamor of the Slackwater Crossing/Culvert/Iron Aqueduct that the Furnace Run crossing by the canal has, the Ohio Canal's crossing of Yellow Creek has its interesting aspects.

Anytime a potential water source was discovered in early Ohio, our fore-fathers attempted to make use of it. Sometime around 1820, David Parker constructed a mill near the confluence of Yellow Creek and the Cuyahoga River, about 30 miles south of the tiny village of Cleveland. When the canal was planned through that area in 1824-25, the land and water were required by the Canal Commissioners. Parker refused to sell, so the property was "taken." Later, the heirs of David Parker were allotted \$130.00 as compensation for "damages."

The Yellow Creek Crossing was in Section No. 35 of the canal, north of the Portage Summit, and contained three locks – Lower Portage (No. 22), Upper Portage (No. 23) and Yellow Creek/Niles (No. 24). It also contained the junction of Yellow Creek and the Cuyahoga River. The contractors for this section were Abraham L. Beaumont and Henry F. Guy, both from New York and experienced contractors fresh off the Erie Canal.

Yellow Creek flowed into the river through a wide valley. The Ohio Canal engineers decided it would be more economical to use, and would provide an additional water source, by building an earthen embankment across the valley for the towpath and allowing excess water to flow over a timber dam and waste weir.

An impromptu settlement sprang up at the crossing and was called Yellow Creek Basin. Then, in 1836, Peter Voris, a surveyor, and two men named Henry and Snodgrass laid out a formal village plat on the west side of the river just south of Yellow Creek. They called it Niles. A tract of 100 acres was sent aside for the project, but only a small area of the plat,

as filed in Portage County, was actually registered. Before a boom in its behalf could be worked up, the Panic of 1837 occurred and only a few lots were sold.

This economical method of constructing the Ohio Canal across Yellow Creek Valley served well for over a decade, but by the early 1840s the bed of Yellow Creek became so filled with mud and sand deposits, brought down by floods, that navigation was frequently held up and extensive removal operations were necessary. In 1844 the difficulty was remedied by the construction of a cutstone culvert having a cord of 20 feet for the passage of the creek under the canal. A short feeder from Yellow Creek was also built to supply the canal with water, with excess water passing over a waste weir into the river.

In the meantime, business along the canal was active. A tavern and a store were established by Mr. Nathaniel Hardy. Two or more warehouses were erected at the basin. Nicholas Botzum and Thomas Owen ran rival mercantile establishments at the same time, each occupying opposite sides of the canal. Later, John A. Botzum operated the establishment on the west side of the canal and Seth M. Thomas the hotel on the east side of the canal. A blacksmith shop and post office were other activities. As in most canal towns, a tavern was initiated and became an important center of local activity. The tavern soon acquired a bad reputation. Counterfeiters and horse thieves reportedly had their headquarters here. Also, an ax murder took place in or near the tavern at one time.

Then, as part of the work to repair damages to the feeder dam complexes between Cleveland and Akron due to extensive flooding during the winter of 1856-57, contracts were let in August 1857 for rebuilding the Yellow Creek and Little Cuyahoga Feeder Dams. The latter dam was reconstructed with stone to provide a more secure structure, and the work was completed in early 1858 at a cost of some \$2,700. The work on the Yellow Creek Feeder Dam that had been contracted

to D. S. Alexander was abandoned in 1858. This was because it was determined that the amount of water that Yellow Creek could supply to the canal in dry seasons, which was the only time that source would be required, was insufficient to justify the expense of reconstruction.

Also in 1858, in order to save on taxes, the plat of the village at Yellow Creek was vacated and the area returned to the status of farm land. The name Niles gradually dropped out of usage and the settlement was commonly called the "Basin" until it was renamed Botzum Station upon completion of the Valley Railroad. The post office, however, was called "Buckeye."

The Valley Railroad, opened in February 1883, provided a route from the coal fields below Massillon to Lake Erie. That portion of the line between Akron and Cleveland, followed the Ohio Canal closely. Several bridges took the railroad across the canal and river. In Peninsula the loop in the river that gave the town its name was changed to suit the railroad.

The Yellow Creek Culvert was altered to receive two tracks of rails, one for through traffic and the other ending at the station, just above the culvert.

The upstream side of the culvert was reinforced on the top with heavier cutstones to withstand the greater load. After the railroad was constructed, canal activity along it diminished rapidly and the Village of Yellow Creek lost much of its status and population.

Activity returned to this area long after canal traffic had ceased. In 1926, the City of Akron's Sewage Disposal Plant was erected. The City acquired 80 acres of land surrounding the 40-acre plant. At one time, more than 500 men were employed on the job. Temporary shacks or barracks and a mess hall were built to accommodate workers. A veritable city was built up here during the construction.

Upon completion of the project, the temporary buildings, as well as the original buildings of Basin/Niles/Botzum were removed. Now nothing remains to prove a settlement was ever here except the little cemetery on the north side of W. Bath Road and the Yellow Creek Culvert.

The culvert, now carrying Riverland Road across the creek, can still be viewed if one is willing to trek through a bit of brush and soggy terrain to get there.

Help Needed To Complete Canal Lock Restoration

The Berks County Parks & Recreation Department restored Union Canal Lock 47 in 1976 with a Bicentennial Grant as part of the development of the Union Canal Bicycle and Walking trail in the Tulpehocken Creek Valley Park system.

Forty years have passed and time has taken a toll on the 10-foot pine miter gates. They will need to be replaced, as well as some stonework repair and removal of vegetation in the lock walls.

The Department looking to others, who may have had similar work done on canal locks, to share information on qualified contractors who could do the required work.

Please send any information to: Cathy Wegener, Recreation & Cultural Programs Manager, cwegener@countyofberks.com, 610-374-8839, Berks County Heritage Center 2201 Tulpehocken Road, Wyomissing, PA 19610.



Union Canal Lock 47

Leading To The Lease

By Terry K. Woods

Operation In The Decade Of The 1850s

The decade of the 1850s saw dramatic changes in canal tonnage, types of cargo carried, and finally, in operation on the Ohio Canal. There had been interest in railroads in the state as early as 1826, but that technology hadn't really been ready. Then the economic panics of the late 1830s and early 1840s delayed railroad development. With the improvement of the economy in the late 1840s; many of the old railroad plans were dusted off, the state legislature was appealed to for funds or sanctions, and the rush to build railroads was on.

Beginning in the early 1850s, railroad competition hit the canals hard and often. The Sandusky, Mansfield and Newark Railroad began through operation from Newark, a vital shipping point on the Ohio Canal, to the lake at Sandusky in 1851. Officials of the railroad quickly offered faster and cheaper service to a lake port than did the canal, with the result that grain shipments north on the canal from Newark fell to less than half of what they had been before 1851.

Total tonnage shipped on the Ohio Canal actually increased during the early 1850s, with coal more than making up the loss in grain shipments. This drastic shift in cargo content had a long-range effect on the Ohio Canal. Coal was a relatively short haul commodity, from the coal fields along the Hocking Branch Canal or from the mines of Tuscarawas and Stark counties along the northern reaches of the Ohio Canal to the Lake or local industries situated on the canal. Forwarders, warehousemen and long-haul freight lines felt the pinch. Many of them closed. More and more three-cabin freighters were seen on the canal now, many captained by independent haulers. The last big boat building boom on the Ohio Canal was seen in the early 50s as many coal carrying craft were constructed. In fact, the total number of boats operating on the Ohio Canal in 1856 approached or possibly exceeded the number operating in those halcyon days of 1838.

Tolls on coal, however, were low and, since hauls were relatively short, overall receipts on the Ohio Canal fell. The Toledo & Western railroad opened along the route of the Miami & Erie Canal, diverting more than half of the wheat, corn and oats carried to Toledo. Incoming receipts for all of Ohio's canals fell below expenditures for maintenance for the first time in 1856, though receipts on the Ohio Canal did not fall below expenditures until 1858. The Cleveland & Mahoning railroad gained control of the Pennsylvania & Ohio Canal in 1858. Tolls on that canal were raised so high as to divert all business to the railroad. Tonnage that had previously been funneled into the Ohio Canal at Akron from the P&O was lost. The Tuscarawas Branch of the Cleveland & Pittsburgh railroad came into direct competition with the Ohio Canal between Akron and Canal Dover, with the railroad finally securing written contracts from all shippers of freight to and from Canal Dover to use the railroad instead of the canal in 1860. Now, as many people saw it, the canals of Ohio were a definite liability, and the "wolves" began to howl.

Disillusionment & Lease

In 1850 the Board of Public Works bypassed the legislature by employing its discretionary administrative powers, and ordered extensive repairs on the canals, including the rebuilding of 19 locks on the Ohio Canal. In 1851, the Board made a proposal to the legislature that, in order to meet railroad competition, the state should undertake a major program of reconstruction, enlarging and deepening the state's canals. Looking at the projected price tag for the program of a little over \$2,000,000, the legislature turned the proposal down, as well as similar requests afterward.

As early as the session of 1852-53, a proposition was introduced into the State Senate to dispose of the canals. The committee on public works made a favorable report on the proposal, stating that the canals

could be sold for \$4,000,000. No action was taken on this bill, but both the legislature and the people of Ohio began thinking in terms of ridding themselves of the burden of maintaining the canals. At first a few of the least profitable and useful of the Public Works were disposed of. The Warren County Canal, a small branch on the southern portion of the Miami & Erie, was sold in 1854, and a portion of the National Road between Springfield and Bridgeport was leased.

In an attempt to reduce the annual maintenance costs on the state's canals, the legislature bowed to the prevalent thought in 1855 that "private enterprise is more efficient," and concluded a five-year contract with private firms for maintenance and repairs of the canals. This plan was a failure from the beginning. Rather than demonstrating the efficiency of private enterprise, the contractors neglected all but emergency repairs to maintain their own profits. As a result, the canals became nearly impassable in many sections during 1856, and banks were allowed to collapse; culverts and locks deteriorated; and vegetation clogged reservoirs, feeder channels and the main canal itself. The legislature cut the board's budget so sharply that even adequate supervision of the contractors proved impossible.

The legality and worth of the canal maintenance contracts were debated furiously within the legislature and among the populous. The contracts were finally repudiated by the legislature in 1857 when a special committee concluded that fraud and collusion had occurred during the original negotiations. However, after the contract system was nullified, the Board of Public Works continued to use four out of the five contractors for maintenance work.

During the debate on the legality of the 1855 contracts one strong faction of the legislature sought to rid the state of its canals altogether, by outright sale to private interests. Opponents of that plan blocked it successfully then, but by the late 50s, disposal or retainment of the public works became one of the principal questions in Ohio. In 1857, Ohio's Governor Chase recommended the sale of the canals for their "fair value." Later that year the state auditor placed

a value of \$3,000,000 on them. A year later, due to decreasing tonnage and revenues, the estimate was reduced to \$2,000,000. In 1859, the legislature passed an act providing for the leasing of the entire public works for five years at \$54,000 per year. Any leasing company was required to have a \$510,000 bond, railroad companies were forbidden to bid, and rigid conditions of maintenance and repair were laid down. There were no bidders.

Early in 1860, a firm made a proposal to lease the canals for 10 years beginning May 16 for \$200,000. The proposal included the promise to keep the canals in repair and return them to the state in good condition. The company also agreed to purchase all the state's equipment at a fair appraisal and promised that the tolls would not be raised over those of 1858. The legislature, however, was not yet ready to lease the canals and that year it passed two acts designed to shave operating expenses on the canals.

In March 1860, the Board of Public Works was directed to release all the men who had been acting as locktenders along Ohio's canals except for those stationed at feeder gates. The legislature also passed another act in March limiting expenditures on all the public works to \$2,000 per month.

The harvests of 1860 were good in Ohio. The canals might have shown a modest profit had not disastrous flooding in April caused great damage to the system. The through canal from Cleveland to Portsmouth wasn't opened until May 30, and the costs to repair the canals after these floods far exceeded the monthly maintenance allowance laid down. Many in and out of the legislature decided that it now seemed desirable for the State to rid itself of such an expensive burden. The legislature applied themselves to the problem and, on May 8, 1861, an act was passed providing for the lease of the Public Works of the state of Ohio for a period of 10 years to the highest bidder. Bids were advertised, two were received and on June 2, 1861, the canals of Ohio passed into private hands.

A Budapest to Belgrade Tour

Cruising the Danube's Iron Gate Region

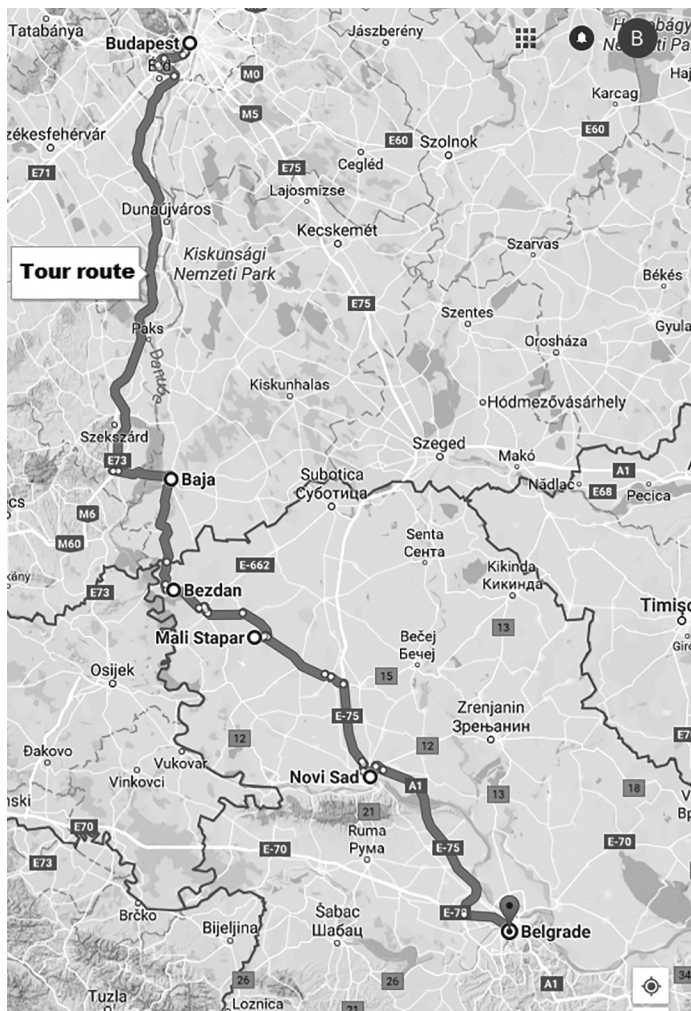
By Bill Holdsworth

This spring my wife, Chris, and I enjoyed a tour that featured Hungarian and Serbian canals, as well as the Iron Gate region of the Danube. The six-day tour started in Budapest and ended in Belgrade. The journey was sponsored by Inland Waterways International, which promotes canals worldwide, and Danube Propeller, which campaigns for the development of nautical tourism in the Middle Danube region.

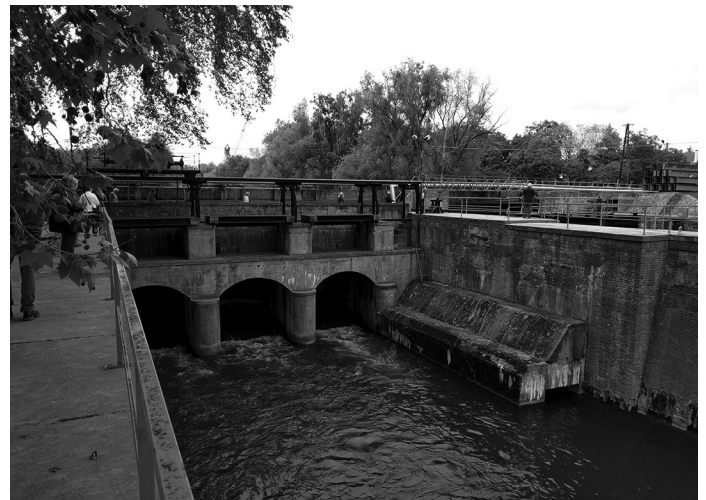
We traveled by bus for the first three days, journeying through southern Hungary and northern Serbia. After that we used a combination of boat and bus to explore the Iron Gate region between Belgrade and Kladovo.

Beautiful Budapest: This city has earned its status as a popular tourist destination. The Pest side of the river boasts a wonderful collection of Belle Époque buildings, dating back to the city's heyday as the co-capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Ironically, the economic stagnation under four decades of communist rule helped preserve these late 19th-century gems. And they sparkle next door to examples of brutalist architecture from the socialist era.

Budapest is a popular destination for European river cruises. We saw four large Viking cruise ships moored there and four similarly sized ships for a rival cruise line.



The route of the tour



The group tours Deák Ferenc lock at the entrance to the disused Baja-Bezdán Canal – Photo by Bill Holdsworth



Mali Stapar lock on the Bezdán-Vrbas Canal – Photo by Chris Holdsworth

Hapsburg canals: Heading south from Budapest toward Serbia, we visited canals built during the 19th century when the area was ruled by the Hapsburgs, the Austrian royal family.

Hungary's Deák Ferenc lock served two purposes, first as the northern end of the Baja Bezdán canal and secondly as a pumping station to maintain the water level in the canal. The lock was built in 1876.

Northern Serbia features a network of canals between the Tisa and Danube Rivers. We stopped at Bezdán to tour the river lock, built in 1875 but currently inoperable. We visited the nicely restored lock and mill at Mali Stapar.

These Serbian waterways are ripe for redevelopment as a recreational resource for boats and bicycles. The tour group met with local officials twice to promote redevelopment.

Iron Gate: The scenic highlight of the trip was a cruise from Kladovo to Donji Milanovich on the last day of the tour. This 40-mile cruise took us through four narrow gorges in the Iron Gate region of the Danube River that divides Romania and Serbia. Dramatic cliffs line the river as it flows between the Carpathian and Balkan Mountains.



Tour group cruises along the Iron Gate region of the Danube River – Photo by Bill Holdsworth



View of the Danube River in the Iron Gate region – Photo by Chris Holdsworth



The author aboard the ship cruising the Danube in the Iron Gate – Photo by Chris Holdsworth

The region is about 100 miles east of Belgrade, as the Danube River meanders towards the Black Sea. Two large dams and their associated locks punctuated the cruise. Construction of the dams between 1964 and 1984 raised the river level by 100 feet.

The Danube flows fast here. A British couple on the tour owns a canal boat in France. We asked them whether they would ever consider bringing their boat through the Iron Gate region. They said their boat could travel downriver through the gorges, but didn't have enough power to travel upriver. Their return trip to France would require travel via the Black Sea, Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean Sea.

Continued on p. 20

CANALENDER

Dec. 2, 2017: Old Fashioned Christmas at the Canal" in Delphi, Ind. 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Wabash and Erie Canal. Event information available at www.wabashanderiecanal.org/activities

March 3, 2018: Canal Society of New York State 2018 Annual Winter Symposium. Monroe Community College in Rochester, N.Y. Information available at www.newyorkcanals.org/explore_events.htm

April 13-15, 2018: Canal Society of Indiana 2018 Spring Tour, Huntington, Ind. Hotel: Best Western, 5501 Coventry Lane Fort Wayne, Indiana 46804. Visit indcanal.org/newsletters/the-tumble-november-2017/.

Aug. 17-19, 2018: Canal Society of Indiana 2018 Fall Tour, Piqua, Ohio. Miami & Erie Canal. Visit indcanal.org/canalander/ for further information.

Sept. 10-12, 2018: World Canals Conference 2018, Athlone, Ireland. Journey to Athlone Co. Westmeath in the heart of Ireland and at the heart of the Irish Inland Waterways network. www.wccireland2018.com/

Oct. 14-16, 2018: New York State Canal Conference: Hilton Garden Inn, Staten Island, N.Y. Visit newyorkcanals.org for more information.

Canal News on the Internet

Contaminated Site on Rideau Canal	weather.com/en-CA/canada/news/news/contaminated-rideau-canal
The Geopolitics of the Kra Canal	www.military.com/daily-news/2017/10/04/geopolitic-kra-canal.html
Dartmouth Inclined Plane Marine Railway	www.youtube.com/watch?v=HrQaVNZnP4g
'Magnet' Fishing Hooks WW2 Bomb on Canal	www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-41805764
Old Erie Canal Heritage Park at Port Byron, NY	s.newyorkupstate.com/2r0PKTT
Grant's Canal	www.atlasobscura.com/places/grants-canal
Some Erie Canal Banks to be Stripped of Trees	www.wgrz.com/news/local/vegetation-to-be-removed-along-erie-canal/481397326

Budapest to Belgrade—continued from p.19

Serbian hospitality: Krsta Pašković, head of Danube Propeller, and his friends did a wonderful job of showing us their country. In Novi Sad our lunch at the base of Petrovaradin fortress offered great food in a riverside setting. We had a terrific guided tour of the Kalemegdan fortress in Belgrade. A winery complex in Rajac near the Bulgarian border provided another unforgettable lunch.

Memorable museums: Our trip through the Iron Gate region surprised us with its museums. Kladovo's Archaeological Museum is world class with its prehistoric, Roman and medieval artifacts. The Lepenski Vir museum's preservation of a Neolithic site impressed us. The archaeological site was relocated

to its current location in the 1970s when construction of the Iron Gate dams raised the water level of the Danube. We liked the reconstruction of a Roman villa at Viminacium.

Unfortunate history: In our travels we saw reminders of unhappy events in Hungary and Serbia in recent decades. In Budapest one government building highlights bullet holes from the unsuccessful 1956 anti-communist uprising. At the Hungarian/Serbian border we saw the razor wire fence erected during the European migrant crisis in 2015. In Belgrade, a banner on the Serbian parliament building proclaims that the 1998 NATO bombing campaign will never be forgiven. At Bezdan we spotted a memorial to the World War II Battle of Batina where Soviet troops and Serbian partisans fought German and Croatian forces.