



# THE MULE

AUTUMN 2020

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*Camillus Erie Canal Park - Founded 1972*



The **Camillus Erie Canal Park** was renamed the “**Liz and Dave Beebe Camillus Erie Canal Park**” on September 20, 2020 at a ribbon-cutting ceremony led by Camillus Parks and Recreation Director **Eric Bacon** and Town Supervisor **Mary Ann Coogan**. The rededication ceremony honored the contribution that Liz and Dave have made, not only to Camillus history, but to the legacy of the Erie Canal in New York State. Numerous volunteers, friends, and family members attended the ceremony, which was organized by the park’s Executive Director **Carol Knowles** and Assistant Canal Coordinator **Kandi Ladd**.

The Canal Park is an amazing achievement. It all began in 1972, when New York State offered the Town of Camillus a seven-mile long parcel of abandoned canal lands. That parcel consisted of 164 acres stretching from Warners Road to Newport Road, abandoned since 1917. The town board accepted the offer, saving what remained of the Erie Canal in Camillus from being filled in with trash and industrial waste. Since that time, the Park has grown to over 400 acres and contains 14 miles of trails. 2020 is the park’s 48th anniversary.



Since its founding, the Canal Park has been developed by Liz and Dave, whose dedication to Canal heritage preserved a stretch of the 19th century Erie Canal and its Nine Mile Creek aqueduct. The Park includes the Sims' Store Museum, a replica of the original canal store constructed by John Sims prior to 1860 and originally located on the Erie Canal about two miles east of the present museum location.

Over the past 48 years, countless volunteers under the direction of Liz and Dave have developed the Park



with the threefold purpose of historic preservation, education, and recreation. Since its inception, all the work and operations at the park have been handled by volunteers, who have cleared the canal and trails; built bridges, buildings, and boathouses; hosted countless student field trips and visitors; held weekly work parties for maintenance and construction; run the museum; and conducted museum and boat tours.

It’s a busy place!

**Fall and Winter 2020-21 at the Museum**

The museum and gift shop will be open on **Wednesday and Saturday** afternoons from **12:00 – 4:00 pm** this fall and winter.

Stop by and do some holiday shopping, we have many new items for sale.

**Holiday Open House at the Park**

**Sunday, December 6, 2020**



Come any time from 1:00 to 4:00 pm to stroll through the museum and see our festive trees and decorations while visiting with friends at a social distance. Don't forget to bring your holiday mask.

You can do some last-minute holiday shopping at the gift shop, then follow the path to the pavilion to check out more decorations and enjoy some Holiday music while warming up at the fire pits. Try some hot drinks and delicious holiday cookies.

We hope that you come and enjoy the holidays on the Erie Canal. No need to bring anything but your holiday spirit!!

**Volunteer Work**

The park volunteers have been busy since our last newsletter and continued to provide recreation and education to travelers and community visitors.

We would like to thank all the volunteers who have been at the park this summer and fall. Without you the park would not have been a welcoming spot for people to enjoy during their free time. Most people have commented about the beauty of the park. Thanks to the volunteers, the park is a destination spot for many people.



The boat trips were successful and the gift shop had many sales. Thanks for keeping the boat trips going, the museum and gift shop open, the trails and gardens elegantly manicured, and the buildings in great shape. We are so proud of the park and of our wonderful volunteers who have worked so hard to make the Erie Canal Park such a wonderful place to visit despite ongoing pandemic concerns.

**Calendar of Events 2021**

**Volunteer Award Dinner - March 20**  
**Orientation Day - April 10**  
**Clean Sweep - April 24**  
**Opening Day - May 2**  
**Memorial Day Parade - May 31**

**Chicken BBQ - July 17**  
**Towpath Day - August 14**  
**Snippets and Tales - September 19**  
**Snippets and Tales - October 17**  
**Holiday Party - December 5**



## **Liz Beebe's Retirement**

September 12, 2020 turned out to be a warm clear day, just right for a socially distanced outdoor celebration of the retirement of our long time Executive Director, **Liz Beebe**. Folks mostly brought their own chairs and masks, spreading out in and around the pavilion for the festivities. Even a pandemic couldn't stop this momentous occasion.



We began by listening to the trio of **Eileen Rose, Shirley Stevens** and **Tom Burr**. These folks did a fantastic job finding music that was either Erie Canal related or appropriate for canal times. They included numbers by Stephen Foster and his contemporaries, and a few songs representative of events at the time such as a rollicking tongue-in-cheek ditty about giving women the vote. What a great job they did with their selections.

There were a number of tributes to Liz, including speeches, songs, and accolades. It could have gone on forever due to the countless projects, committees, and events that Liz oversaw. Every person in the crowd could have gotten up to speak about how she had personally encouraged them to add their efforts to making the canal the fine place it is today. Due to her diligence and dedication countless generations will benefit from our threefold mission of education, recreation, and preservation. We thank her for her oversight over the span of so many years.

Liz was visibly pleased to receive a number of parting gifts. First and foremost was a beautiful piece of glass etched with a canal boat traveling over the Camillus aqueduct. On the award, the inscription read: **"Bridging past and future for 49 years – Liz Beebe 2020"**. Among her other gifts were roses, a scrapbook, a car tote, a sweater, an outdoor chair, a restaurant gift certificate, etc. Many featured an orange SU theme, perfect for a such a diehard supporter. Her giant retirement card included the personal well wishes of many canal volunteers.



***Thank you Liz for your 49 years of extraordinary dedication. Your extraordinary and remarkable contributions will be never be forgotten.***

Town of Camillus Erie Canal Park  
109 East Way  
Camillus, NY 13031



Please join us to further our mission of preservation, education, and recreation at

**CAMILLUS ERIE CANAL PARK**  
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