



# Canal Society

of New York State  
[www.newyorkcanals.org](http://www.newyorkcanals.org)

August 2, 2020

Dear Society Members and Friends,

Our Erie Canal Heritage Park opened yesterday for the season, delayed due to the pandemic. As I watched the Visitors Center come alive, I once again was so impressed by the great visitation and the many very positive comments. I could make out the faint traces of smiles through the masks! The centerpiece of the exhibits continues to be the wonderful and very large model of an Enlarged Erie Canal lock, once part of New York State's display at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Foremost among our concerns in reopening is the protection of our visitors and staff. This concern has also highlighted the need to provide better protection to our displayed artifacts such as the lock model.

There have recently been two important events for the Canal Society. One is that the Canal Society was invited to raise funds to match a grant from the Pomeroy Fund for New York State History to help with the expenses we are incurring to keep the Heritage Park operating safely under State pandemic guidelines. For every two dollars we raise, the Pomeroy Fund will grant one dollar. Your donation will help us raise the funds to help cover changes to our exhibits and operation in light of the pandemic, including temporary exhibits in the front windows of the Erie House and a protective bonnet over the 1893 lock model in our Visitors Center.

The other event was the passing of Rob Mangold.

I had to think of Rob Mangold and his recent tragic death as I watched visitors admire the model. A good friend and a passionate Society member and trustee, Rob was committed to the Heritage Park and particularly to the model. He brought the model back to life so that it could be a major part of our interpretation at the Park for everyone's enjoyment. His painstaking attention to detail was combined with countless hours of incredibly focused labor. The model has truly become a magnet to draw interest in canal history, so much so that plans were developed last season to make it more accessible and better protected. Indeed, the evening before Rob's death, I was discussing with him how to raise funds to do so.

In recognition of Rob's dedication, I am asking you join with me in contributing to make this happen. A new lower base will allow younger audiences to enjoy the detail,

replacing the sawhorses on which it now rests. It will also allow us to move the model more easily, perhaps even to other venues in the Park's off-season. Plexiglass protection will keep inquiring fingers from inadvertently damaging the model and to help keep off dust. The heightened concerns from the pandemic highlight these crucial needs to better ensure the safety of the model and our visitors. A plaque honoring Rob's memory will be an essential part of this work. And, again, your contributions will be matched by the Pomeroy Fund.

I hope you will help. Contributions can be mailed to the Canal Society of New York State, c/o Anita Cottrell, Treasurer, 7308 State Route 173, Manlius, NY 13104.

I also hope you will visit the Park to admire the model and to think of Rob.

Sincerely,



Craig Williams  
President, Board of Directors  
Canal Society of New York State



Rob at work on the lock model in the Heritage Park Visitors Center (August 29, 2016)