

Volunteers help with Pittsford Canal Clean Sweep



East Extra
Missy Rosenberry
Guest columnist

Dozens of adult and youth volunteers will descend on Pittsford on Saturday, April 21, with their work gloves and rakes in hand, to help clean up the Erie Canal area.

The occasion is the 13th annual Canal Clean Sweep, a joint effort of the New York State Canal Corporation and Parks and Trails New York. Scheduled to coincide with Earth Day every

year, the event brings together volunteers all over the state for a day of spring cleaning along the Canalway Trail, in canal-side parks, and in other public areas.

Corn Hill Navigation, which owns and operates the *Sam Patch* tour boat in Pittsford, will be participating, focusing on the portion of the canal on which the *Sam Patch* operates.

L.J. Fisher, captain of the *Sam Patch* and executive director of Corn Hill Navigation, considers the event an ideal partnership.

"We were founded to enhance the sustainability, educate about our waterways, showcase the history and natural beauty of our waterways," she said. "For us this is a great opportunity. We get to give back, clean up our home port, (and) involve members of the community."

Only about 10 volunteers participated in Corn Hill Navigation's first Clean Sweep in 2016. Last year that increased to more than a dozen. This year, Fisher expects upwards of 40 helpers, including members of three

If You Go

The Sam Patch Canal Clean Sweep will be held Saturday, April 21 from 9 to 11 a.m. Please register at www.ptny.org to assure enough supplies for everyone. Meet at 9 a.m. at the ticket booth on Schoen Place in Pittsford. Gloves and rakes are helpful but not necessary. For more information, visit samppatch.org, and to find other Clean Sweep efforts in our area, visit www.ptny.org.

Pittsford-area Brownie and Girl Scout troops.

Pittsford residents Amy and Alan Hatch and their daughters, Allyssa and Alexis, were among those who helped out last year. But the magnitude of the task took them by surprise, and they didn't make as much progress as they had hoped.

They'll be back on April 21, along with several more helpers from Allyssa's Girl Scout Troop 60802.

"This gives the girls a chance to really volunteer," Amy said. "So many times the activities are adult-driven but this is something that they can do themselves from beginning to end."

Plus, she added, "The reward is immediate. The

canal path will immediately be cleaner and nicer for people to enjoy. People walking the path are appreciative."

Pittsford Brownie Troop 61051 will also be pitching in for the first time. Troop Leader Larissa Lalka calls the opportunity a "natural fit."

"It's my goal to teach the girls to become better citizens," she said. "We're always looking for hands-on volunteer projects, but with 23 second-graders in our troop, both size and age prove to be a challenge." With the Clean Sweep, she added, "We could be outside and do something good for our community."

"I love that the kids are involved," Fisher said. "Education is one of the

primary (parts) of our mission. Being able to showcase the beauty of the canal and getting kids involved makes good stewards."

It's already making an impact on those kids. Nine-year old Allyssa Hatch, for example, knows why it's so important to clean up the trash along the canal.

"When the new spring baby animals are born, their moms or dads will get food, scraps and plastic and possibly give it to their babies, or the babies could get hurt by it," she said.

Pick of the Week

Walkers and runners are invited to the first Amy's Run from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday, April 22 at Durand Eastman Park.

The run honors Amy Appleby, an accomplished Ultra runner, who died unexpectedly in March.

Participants are encouraged to run or walk the 2.2-mile course as many times as they can in six hours. Registration is \$45 before April 18, then it increases to \$55. Proceeds will benefit an education fund for Amy's daughters. For more information and to register, search for First Annual Amy's Run on Facebook.

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