



# Spring Canal Town Celebrations Welcome Boaters

by Pete Bardunias, President/CEO, the Chamber of Southern Saratoga County

As the weather warms up, some great festivals are coming to southern Saratoga County to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the start of Erie Canal construction in 1817 as well as the many community traditions we celebrate here in this historic and exciting region. Some highlights:

On May 19, the official start of the Canal system's 2017 navigation system will commence at 10AM as the 524 miles of waterways are opened to both recreational and commercial interests. In honor of this special anniversary year, there will be no tolls charged for the use of the waterway.

The following day, May 20, is the Village of Waterford Canal Fest will fill the harbor area with merriment from 10AM to 6PM accompanied by live music, dance performances, children's activities, kayaking, educational walks and presentations and more. It's a perfect way to start the season. Please be sure to pick up a local map from either the Visitors Center or the Chamber of Southern Saratoga County's Waterford Field Office (in the lobby of Universal Office Products, 43 Broad Street) and check out the shops and restaurants downtown. Just a few weeks later, the Waterford Harbor Farmers Market commences its 2017 season as well, with farm produce, meats and other products available right at the waterfront each Sunday from early June through Columbus Day weekend.

The evening of June 16, the Mechanicville Duck Derby will take place right at the City Docks. The docks have recently been updated and have excellent rest rooms, showers, a community bulletin board with information for boaters and easy access to the downtown area. Tickets to the Derby are on sale by calling (518) 664-7791. The first duck to make it across the finish line (don't worry, they are rubber ducks!) nets the winner \$1,000.00 and the last duck to finish in the allotted time period wins \$200! There will also be food, vendors and activities. You can watch it all from your boat!

Here's something to put on the calendar for September – the World Canal Conference is coming to Syracuse in honor of the 200th Anniversary of the New York State Canal System. Boaters may wish to get involved in the festivities, taking place between September 24 and 28. For more information on the Conference visit <http://wcc2017syracuse.com/>

So please plan to visit us this year! For more information on the Canal System visit [www.canals.ny.gov](http://www.canals.ny.gov) or the Chamber of Southern Saratoga County website at [www.southernsarotoga.org](http://www.southernsarotoga.org), or call 518-371-3763.



(above) Decisions, decisions – which way should you explore the canals? Take your boat up the Hudson, or turn left into the Mohawk? Or maybe take a cruise on the paddlewheeler Caldwell Belle, based in Schuylerville, or enjoy a kayak ride through Upstate Kayak Rentals. More information available at [www.southernsarotoga.org](http://www.southernsarotoga.org)

(left) Visitors to the Village of Waterford Canal Fest get to chat with boaters as they begin their journey through this historic waterway, and enjoy the food and festivities along the docks.

(below) Through the eyes of children – the rubber ducks make their way down a roaring stream into the Hudson River as kids on shore watch. Will your duck be the \$1,000.00 winner?

