On June 23, it will be time for another canal cleanup. The last few have been sparsely attended. I know it's a busy time for everyone but keeping up on our waterway is important; some may say imperative.

Volunteers will line the banks of the Miami-Erie Canal armed with rakes, cutters and weed whackers. Intrusive weeds and brush will be no more and litter will be picked up and properly disposed of. Occasionally, some brave soul dons a pair of waders and heads in to pull out bicycles, car tires and more.

The effort will be made to spruce up the canal for the upcoming Fourth of July celebration and also to keep a handle on the ever-growing weeds and small trees that seem to need no rain to survive and thrive.

For many, the canal is an eyesore. "Fill it in," they say. For others, the canal is a historic landmark and part of our heritage. Delphos was once thought to be on the verge of becoming a huge, thriving city when the canal traffic was at its peak. Then along came the railroads and those dreams of glory faded.

However you look at it, it needs to stay clean. I know a lot of trash blows in the canal on a windy day. That would tell me that we have to keep trash picked up elsewhere as well.

I don't ever recall seeing things in the canal when I was growing up. There may have been but my co-conspirator in the newsroom doesn't recall that being a problem back then, either. (We won't say how far back then is.)

The canal was the hot spot year round. Fishing and crawdad-catching in the summer, ice skating in the winter and just goofing around in between.

I can remember building fires on the banks in the winter so we wouldn't have to go in as soon because of freezing fingers and toes. Ice skates seemed to draw cold to your feet. It's some

kind of unexplained phenomenon. The whole entire rest of your body would be warm and your toes would be numb with cold.

Hockey games broke out without notice with milk crates set up for goals. The slice of skates on ice and the clashing of hockey sticks filled many an afternoon. Even shoveling the snow off the canal was an entertaining prospect.

I can remember a perpetual pile of wet clothing in the mud room and endless cups of hot chocolate with marshmallows floating on top.
Today, I look out the back window and have to squint to tell if that white thing on the other side of the canal is a grocery bag or a duck. I see an occasional skater in the winter now. Anglers on the banks are a little more common, but still, nothing like it once was. The skates and poles have been replaced with video games and computers.

There are quite a few of us out there who remember the “good old days” on the canal. Thankfully, there are quite a few who would like to see more.

When you see the notice for the clean-up effort, please make a little time to help. It will give you some instant gratification and the canal a much-needed facelift.