

Indy spots to cure

BUTLER BOREDOM

1 Canal creates recreation destination

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What's 11.3 miles long, pounded with sneakers by day and swarming with mosquitoes by night? You guessed it – it's the canal path, and when warm weather hits the city, this path is a hit with Indy residents and Butler students alike.

Stretching from College Avenue near Broad Ripple, along the western border of Butler's campus and all the way to 30th Street, the Indianapolis Water Company Canal. Few community members know it by this name, but it is utilized by walkers, runners, bikers and, in some portions, even in-line skaters.

However, according to long-time Indianapolis resident Mark Snyder, the waterway wasn't always such a positive asset for the city.

"The story I hear," said Snyder, "is that the project [to build the canal path] sent the state into bankruptcy when it was built in 1913." Despite its rocky beginning, the canal, with its shady, winding gravel path, has become a beloved site of sport and recreation for residents on the north side.

Snyder, who used to live within walking distance of the canal, now drives from 43rd Street twice a week to walk his dogs because the canal path is "just perfect the way it is."

Senior Butler student Angela Sandberg jogs on the path four times a week. Unlike Snyder, however, she does have some problems with the path.

According to Sandberg, the potholes that dot the path need to be filled. Still, she said the peaceful, natural, noise-pollution-free surroundings of the path are "relaxing and therapeutic."

In addition to athletes and exercisers, the path also plays host to a wide range of plants and wildlife. An observant visitor will notice turtles clawing through the water, mallards and geese waddling in the grass and a heron or crane perched amid the underbrush along the canal's banks, now and then.

While enjoying the area's quiet beauty, one point of concern of which visitors should be aware, noted Sandberg, is that of safety. While most would agree that people at the canal are very friendly during the day, Sandberg said that at night the trail is less trafficked and could be dangerous, especially for women. The Butler University Police Department has also repeatedly advised students to frequent the trail during daylight hours and in pairs.

The canal path can be accessed near

campus from four different locations on Michigan Road just north of the Indianapolis Art Museum, behind Gallahue Hall, from the parking lot of Holcomb Gardens and on 52nd Street near the Butler baseball diamond.

