THE C & O CANAL NEWSLETTER

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PURPOSE: This newsletter reports periodically on progress by the Potomac Council, American Youth Hostels, in developing a hostel chain along the C & O Canal. The newsletter is sent to persons and groups known to be interested in the establishment of a hostel chain and in the preservation of the C & O Canal for its recreational and historic values. The newsletter is also being sent to the C & O Canal Level-Walkers. Their knowledge of particular sections will be helpful in future Hostel programs. The editor invites comments, contributions, and suggestions that will further these aims.

John E. Connor, Editor

Dear Friends,

What is a hostel, you may ask? It is an inexpensive overnight accommodation, located throughout the U.S. and 33 foreign countries. It may be a converted farm building, an ancient castle, a sailing ship, a school dormitory, or a specially constructed building. Resident houseparents are in charge of each hostel. Hostels include separate sleeping quarters and washrooms for fellows and girls, a kitchen and a common room. Hostels further good will among people of all lands, by providing, especially for youth, the inexpensive, educational and recreational, outdoor travel opportunities of hosteling, that is, travel primarily by bicycle and on foot along scenic trails and byways, and to places of historic and cultural interest in America and abroad. It is the goal of the Potomac Council to maintain a chain of hostels on the C & O Canal dedicated to the service of youth, young adults, families and organizations.

New Work at Seneca. Many long hours of back-breaking work were spent for 5 weeks getting the Old Stonehouse Hostel at Seneca, Md. in shape for the Justice Douglas Reunion Hike. Mrs. Ernest Grubb and Dr. & Mrs. William J. Frank, the houseparents, deserve special thanks for the time, money and effort they have put into renovating the hostel. In addition, they paid for the installation of a new floor. Among other work done was the construction of an outside staircase, installation of new sink and stove, as well as generally cleaning-up work.

Justice Douglas C & O Canal Reunion Hike of May 5-6. Among the hikers who spent the night at the Seneca Hostel were: Justice and Mrs. William O. Douglas, Secretary of Interior and Mrs. Stewart Udall, and two children, Senator Paul Douglas of Illinois, and Ex-Governor Leroy Collins of Florida. These famous outdoorsmen were impressed by the Seneca Hostel and expressed keen interest in a plan to establish a complete Youth Hostel chain.

Sandy Hook Acquisition. Located on the Maryland side of Harpers' Ferry, the projected Sandy Hook Hostel is the first full-fledged new Hostel to become part of the canal chain. Under the leadership of Tighe E. Woods of the Northwest Kiwanis Club of Washington, acquisition of this hostel was made possible. This is the first instance in the U.S. where a service club has undertaken to sponsor a hostel. The Kiwanis Club undertook to purchase the property for $6,500 and has set up $2,000 to bring the building up to Hostel standards. The Potomac Area Council agreed to undertake putting in the movable
installations up to $1,000. Work will occupy the coming summer. Target opening date is set for September 15. We'll keep you posted on progress at this location.

The Kiwanis Club decided that this method of contribution would be the best way of helping youth develop into healthy, happy, self-reliant, well-informed, community-minded and world-minded citizens. We hope that others will see the great need for citizenship training and will follow the example of our friends of the Kiwanis Club.

Yours truly,

C & O Canal Committee
Potomac Area Council
American Youth Hostels

NOTE: Following is the status of the project with towpath mileages from Washington:

0.0 Washington: Dupont Hostel
22.8 Seneca Youth Hostel
42.2 Dickerson (location needed)
59.3 Sandy Hook hostel project
60.7 Harpers Ferry: Hilltop House
72.8 Shepherd College (summer only)
84.4 Dam No. 4 (location needed)
96.8 Falling Waters: Lester Valley
99.8 Williamsport: Mrs. Ardinger
108.6 Four Locks: undeveloped prospect
124.1 Hancock: Miss Susan Creager
140.9 Little Orleans (location needed)
156.3 Paw Paw: Mrs. Ruth Bevans
166.9 Oldtown: two prospects
174.4 Spring Gap: Mrs. Raymond Wheeler
184.5 Cumberland: Algonquin Hotel