

P U B L I C M E E T I N G S O N F U T U R E O F C & O C A N A L

Public information meetings to discuss the future of the C & O Canal National Historical Park were held at the Palisades Field House in Potomac Heights at 8 p.m. on May 17 for the District of Columbia and at 8 p.m. on 24 May at the Allegany Community College, Cumberland for Allegany County. There are still three opportunities to attend the last three meetings: all at 8 p.m. For Washington County at the Williamsport High School, Williamsport on May 31; for Frederick County at the Brunswick Senior High School on June 7; and for Montgomery County at the National Bureau of Standards Auditorium at Gaithersburg, Maryland on June 14. All Level Walkers and friends of the C & O Canal are urged to attend one or more of these meetings.

C & O C A N A L A S S O C I A T I O N R E U N I O N

Thanks principally to Melvin Kaplan, Adam Harsh, William Teach and other members of the Williamsport C & O Canal Club, we once again had a successful Reunion the 28th and 29th of April. Events started with the annual business meeting of the C & O Canal Association on Friday night at the Community Building in Williamsport. The meeting was conducted by outgoing President, Smith Brookhart, and as usual at our annual meeting, lively discussions ensued, centered mainly on the direction which the association should take in the coming year. The new officers of the association are: President, Carl Linden; Vice President, Alan Franklin; Treasurer, Doug Greene; Secretary, Miss Nancy Long; and Public Information Officer, Lou Shollenberger. Tom Hahn remains Chairman of the Level Walkers. Directors: Tom Hahn, Grant Conway, Bill Davies, Jack Berkson, Mel Kaplan, Smith Brookhart. With our usual luck in the weather, Saturday morning turned out to be cool and bright. The only bad day we have had in years was the fateful rainy day when the hike was from Seneca downstream, when most of us ended up in the dog house at Old Anglers Inn. This year's hike began at the Conococheague Aqueduct in Williamsport, led, of course, by Justice Douglas and followed by members of the C & O Canal Association, friends of the canal and of the outdoors, and an assorted group of others. Hiking was most pleasant, with many spring flowers in bloom. This section of the canal, especially above Dam 5, is one of the most lovely on its entire length. Many of the conversations overheard as we hiked along the towpath were concerned with the development of our new park. Members of the C & O Canal Citizens' Advisory Commission and representatives of the National Park Service gave us the benefit of their presence and were interested recipients of the attitudes indicated and advice and criticism voiced by various individuals.

An outdoor lunch was served in the Four Locks area, one of the areas considered for restoration and rewatering. It seems that this was about the pleasantest place we have had for our lunch in years. The hike ended at Ft. Frederick where busses awaited those needing transportation back to Williamsport.

A very pleasant social hour gave us the opportunity to revive old acquaintances and make new ones at the fire house in Halfway, followed by the best dinner that we have had in years. Mel Kaplan served as a fine Master of Ceremonies, introducing Walter Teach who represented the town

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C & O CANAL RENUNION (Continued)

of Williamsport; Miss Nancy Long, Chairman of the C & O Canal Citizens' Advisory Commission, who presented the functions, plans and aspirations of the commission; Russel Dickenson, Director of the National Capital Parks of the National Park Service, who voiced the intensions and general plans of the Park Service with regard to the park development; Miss Mary Miltenberger, Allegany County member of the commission who told us of developments affecting the Cumberland area; and commission member Don Frush who outlined proposed plans for Williamsport. Congressman Gilbert Gude, friend, sponsor, and legislative protector of the C & O Canal, as usual pulled no punches in his remarks concerning the development of the canal and the Potomac River.

LEVEL WALKERS MEETING PROPOSED

Each year we are left disappointed that the Level Walkers really never have an opportunity to discuss their business during the Annual Reunion. The business meeting is too crowded with other items and though we have bits and pieces of conversations between individuals and small groups, we don't have an opportunity to think and talk things out. Several Level Walkers have mentioned to me that we need a meeting, and various suggestions have been offered as to where and when we could meet, some of them associated with the Annual Reunion. I suggest that we have a fall meeting and that the first meeting be at some central location such as Williamsport. We solicit your ideas of where, when, how; Hike? Meal? Etc. Also ideas on what should be discussed. In order to have an orderly and smooth meeting, we suggest that all agenda items be presented before the meeting.

Some Level Walkers have proposed that we break away from the C & O Canal Association. I would like to set the record straight as to where I (Tom Hahn, Level Walker Chairman) stand on this issue. I believe that the Level Walkers are a substantial and responsible and essential part of the C & O Canal Association. I believe that we represent the most active part (based on our actions) of the C & O Canal Association, and because of that it is our responsibility to make and ensure that the C & O Canal Association is a strong and active organization. Membership in the association is the lowest in years. It is our responsibility to ensure that we are well represented; that we fight for a well-developed C & O Canal National Historical Park (and perhaps Potomac River--more and more as we watch the development of the canal, we see that it is an integral part of the Potomac River and its valley and cannot be separated from it). There should be a newsletter or bulletin of the association, and it is hoped that we will help encourage such a means of communication. Any organization that cannot communicate effectively will not succeed. As a start, copies of this newsletter are being made to the general membership of the association. Perhaps in the near future, we will see the association have an active bulletin, at which time we will step back from the very active part we have played. If that is not the case, the Level Walkers will continue as before. It is hoped that an arrangement can be made wherein association dues will also cover Level Walker valid expenses, and that next year Level Walker dues will not be necessary. My future is uncertain, as I am retiring from the navy the first of July. Keep your letters and advice coming to 7535 Will Street and I will keep up the best I can over the next few months. Ft. Meade, Md. 20755

Apologies to Level Walkers Ann Watson and Virgil Smirnow whose reports are not in this issue--we will carry them next time.

Thanks to all of you for your splendid support over the past three years while I have served as your chairman. Let's not let down!! Tom Hahn

LEVEL WALKERS REPORT

1 Rae T. Lewis Tidal Lock to Old Boat Incline (0.0) comments on the Georgetown Waterfront Study that, "High rises along the south side of the Canal could make the latter become a sunless, unattractive "ditch" where trees and grass would not grow. This, in turn, could quickly lead to the area's being abandoned because it will have lost the unique qualities which make it so attractive to people now." Although there have been numerous waterfront surveys during the past decade, none has gained broad public support, largely because of the uproar surrounding the various highway schemes. When the President called for the study last year, he said: "We have come to the point where failure to act immediately on an overall development and preservation plan for the Georgetown waterfront area will mean the loss by default of its unique combination of historical, scenic and natural values..." The study will be divided into three phases, each phase to take two months, beginning February 1.

Miss Lewis also reports that there's a new bicycle shop on 33rd Street just several yards from the Canal. (BIG WHEEL BIKES. \$1.00 per hour. \$4.50 per day. Sells Towpath Guides)

2 Bill Johnson Old Boat Incline to Lock 5 (2.1) of 5239 Carlyn Spring Road, Arlington, Va 22203 has been ill and unable to visit his section for some time. I am sure Bill would appreciate hearing from his friends who might like to share news of the Canal with him.

3 Phil Stone Lock 5 to Cabin John Creek (5.0) states that, "The Canal, the towpath, and the locks and appurtenant structures continue to be in good to excellent condition throughout my section. More water than usual for the time of year (April) was standing in the swamp between the Canal and the River opposite Brookmont. The lower reaches of Cabin John Creek continue to be heavily polluted because of a break in an overloaded sanitary sewer some distance upstream. Correction of this situation awaits construction of a relief sewer down to the Potomac Interceptor along the Canal, and this in turn awaits completion of the Interceptor through Georgetown. Since this was the height of the spring floral season, I concentrated on looking for wild flowers and was rewarded by finding 28 species in bloom, many in profusion... This warm and mostly sunny spring Sunday afternoon brought out a record number of users (351)."

4 Ken Phifer Cabin John Creek to Lock 14 (7.5) provided an interesting account of a bicycle trip which he and his son took from Paw Paw to Seneca as well as furnishing photos for the Towpath Guide.

8 Ed Wesely Swains Lock to Pennyfield (16.6) continues active on the C & O Canal National Historical Park Advisory Commission (Montgomery County).

9 Justice William O. Douglas Pennyfield to Seneca Aqueduct (19.6) and Cathy Douglas were active participants in the Annual Reunion Hike of the C & O Canal Association--the hike, of course, marking once again the historic hike of 1954 lead by Justice Douglas.

Jack Rottier, Co-Level Walker for this section, was also active at the Reunion, with his familiar camera in hand.

11 Grant Conway Tenfoot Island to Sycamore Island (25.0) devotes a great deal of his time as the other Montgomery County member of the C&O Canal National Historical Park. Grant provided a Level Walker report, but it is hidden somewhere in the many other papers which he has sent in during the past few months for the preparation of the third section of the Towpath Guide

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LEVEL WALKERS REPORT (Continued)

12 Bill Clague Sycamore Landing to Edwards Ferry (27.2) reports a sign at the end of Sycamore Landing Road stating, "Department of Natural Resources, Maryland, Fish and Wildlife Commission, Maddux Island," suggesting that Van Deventer Island has been renamed? "The canal in this area is lined with trees of 45 years of age or so on both sides, and had water almost the entire distance with a great many patches of stagnation. There were some places where the fallen trees and tangled brush was almost thick enough in the bed to provide a walkway to the berm side...The Chisel Branch Hiker-Biker Overnighter is in good condition and shows much evidence of recent use...This area is probably the duller in the entire canal, and has very few landmarks...The community of Riverside dwellings between the canal and river just down stream from Edward's Ferry is perhaps the neatest of such communities along the entire river. The old store building at Edward's Ferry is in extremely dangerous condition, and the Park Service ought to board it up...The tow path condition was quite good, and a number of automobile tracks indicates that the Park Service or somebody has been patrolling this thing by car...The area is easily passable by bicycle, and the tow path is in most places dirt all the way across without the grass strip down the center, and there are only a few muddy patches."

16 Anson Courter Lock 26 to Monocacy Aqueduct (39.4) states, "Tow-path good. Locks crumbling a little more...Stretch generally clean except for coal silt in bed of Canal above PepCo and ooze below. Old houses across from Lock 27 removed--generally clean job. Growth in recent clearing on riverside of canal is vigorous, but no good long life trees as yet." (Plus listing of birds)

17 Ray Teele Monocacy Aqueduct to Noland's Ferry (42.2) reports that, "The aqueduct has now been repaired to the extent that it is now safe for hikers and cyclists. The stones of the structure, however, show serious erosion...The towpath is in good condition with the exception of a couple of holes apparently caused by Park Service vehicles. They could be repaired in a matter of minutes by one man with a shovel...At 44.04 the collapsed culvert has not been repaired and the hole is getting larger all the time. From 44.52 to 44.60 the Park Service has established a picnic ground complete with tables, toilets, and two parking areas, one on the river bank with the inevitable boat ramp, and the other on higher ground just downstream from the old bridge piers. This is a beautiful location for a picnic ground and making it did not involve the destruction of trees or shrubs but simply the removal of shacks. We feel that it was unfortunate that the parking areas were not placed on the berm and the boat ramp omitted..."

19 Lyman Stucker Point of Rocks to Catoctin Aqueduct (48.2) reports having a nice chat with Ranger Wineholt at his office at the lockhouse at Lander. Many Level Walkers mention running into Ellwood Wineholt, the Ranger from Seneca to Williamsport, as have I on many occasions. He always has (or takes) the time to visit and talk about the canal--a fine representative of the Park Service, and we all appreciate his devoted services.

Mrs Lavenia Waskey (who lived in the lock tender's house at Lander, her father was Lockkeeper Cross) wrote that she visited with relatives who live near Lock 29, and, "...while there I took a wet, soggy walk from the lock to the Catoctin aqueduct. Looks about the same as it did last fall, when I last saw it...Canal culvert was half closed from years of added soil and trash. How different since the days when the canal was active. We would walk thru in "buggies", and wagons, with the water drip-

LEVEL WALKERS REPORT (Continued)

ping from over head. Farther up the towpath I found the old tall sycamore still standing where my husband used to hunt squirrels...Towpath still a splendid nature trail, even in the rain. I found the aqueduct to be more deteriorated than a year ago. Even to walk across on foot, gives one a feeling of apprehension..."

23 Orville Crowder Harpers Ferry to Dam No. 3 (60.7) is back in Harpers Ferry for a while for those who are trying to catch him because of his far-reaching worldwide nature trips. Had a chance to catch up a bit with him at the Spring Field Trip of the Pennsylvania Canal Society and the Canal Society of New York State on the Lehigh Canal (Pennsylvania) the first weekend in May.

25 Gabriel Jacobs Dargan Quarry to Mountain Lock (65.1) will be missed the next year while he and his family take a year-long house boat trip on the waterways of France. Co-Level Walker Dr. Harold E. Stuft of 12741 Holiday Lane, Bowie, Maryland 20715 will be filling in during the absence. On the Gabriels' last trip to the canal they reported that the lockhouse at Mountain Lock has a new cellar entrance and new steps. "... There were new shutters on some of the lower windows and all the new work was painted peach! ...The wrecked cars mentioned in my last report which were 200 yards downstream of the lock and on the berm side had been removed...This time much of the canal had substantial amounts of water in it. (Included with the report were canal exercises which he uses in his school program. "The idea is to have children learn about the canal without talking at them and by having them actively involved in finding out about the canal. This approach has been very successful..")

28 John Frye Shepherdstown to Lock 39 (72.8) has been busy (among other things) as Chairman of the Historical Sub-Committee (this may not be the correct title) of the C&O Canal National Historical Park Commission. A request was made by John to the American Canal Society to lend support for preservation and restoration of canal structures, but I don't think he has had much individual support to date. Anyone who has anything to say on this subject should write (and encourage friends, particularly out-of-area friends) to John Frye, Gapland, Md. 21736. Both Mr. and Mrs. Frye were welcome additions to the canal trip on the Lehigh Canal in Pennsylvania on 5-6 May. John has also provided a copy of an 1877 map of the Sharpsburg area. Particularly of note is the tramway on the left/downstream/south? side of Antietam Creek to the C & O Canal. We are trying to pin down whether or not there was a canalization of Antietam Creek. Anyone having knowledge of this subject is asked to drop me a line. Grant Conway earlier had information that there may have been a canal and two locks on Antietam Creek. The tramway suggests at least that there would not have been the need of a canal on the extreme lower part of Antietam Creek at the time of the map. As to his section, John Frye says, "... both locks(38/39) retain their good shape. I noticed for the first time the different types of stone, or the way they were faced in Lock 39 which seems to indicate it underwent heavy repair at one time. Since the waste weir culvert adjacent to the lock is well built from concrete, the repairs were probably in the latter days of the canal..."

WILLIAMSPORT AREA--Level Walkers Walter Teach, Mel Kaplan and Adam Harsh were all busy preparing for the Annual Reunion of the C & O Canal Association. Thank you very much, from all the Level Walkers!! Active about the Reunion, was our old friend "Hooper Wolfe, answering questions from all sides. From the remarks made at the Reunion and various accounts heard recently, Williamsport should play a large role in the restoration of the C & O Canal.

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LEVEL WALKERS REPORT (Continued)

41 Charles Morrison Dam No 5 to Lock 47 (106.8) and I have had a continuing discussion on the development of the canal for several months. Each of us has a different way of looking at it. I would like to include here a few comments from a recent letter from him, which represents a part of his point of view, and his points are well taken."...Most people tend to forget that the canal itself, when it was constructed, was an intrusion on the natural river bank. Those who now object to trees being cut would have had much to cry about. The canal has now become a part of the river to the extent that some say they want it fully restored (re-watered I think they mean). Obviously this would mean cutting down a lot of trees, including all of them along the river bank in the slackwater sections. Who is right? What are we trying to conserve anyway - nature, a man-made structure, or the encroachments of private property owners on public land?...I am disappointed, of course, in the role, or lack of role of the C & O Canal Association. It has abdicated its prestigious position and a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be a moderating influence on diverse interests which have concentrated their ire on the National Park Service..."

46 Millstone to Ditch Run Culvert (118.9-121.6) is vacant and available for assignment.

43 Robie Monroe FAMILY Fort Frederick to Ernestville. Robie was in the dog house because I named him as Level Walker to the section, whereas his family shares the responsibility.

48/49 Hancock to Roundtop Mill (124.1)/Roundtop Mill to Lock 53 (127.3) has been taken over by Adele Donnelly. I am sure she would be willing to share either of these sections if there is someone interested in the area. (I recently hiked this stretch, and the area beyond Roundtop Mill is particularly nice.) We will all miss Walter Boardman who has departed the area to live in Florida. He was active in so many of the areas environmental and conservation works, that he will be hard to replace.)

52 Don Ramsey Sideling Hill Aqueduct to Little Orleans provided a fine first report..."Towpath in fine condition throughout, except for the usual occasional pothole. Standing water in most of the canal....Abundant wild-flowers...Sideling Hill Creek Aqueduct--Parts of iron railing missing. Recently unsightly repairs appear to have been made to towpath side of aqueduct (white, gravelly, untrowelled poured concrete, a sad contrast to the craftsmanship of the stonework)....Straus Wilderness Area, BSA, lies nearby up Sideling Hill Creek...at 137.9x canal nearly blocked by what appears to be beans, probably soybeans. I kid you not. Large piece of plastic sheeting partly buried in beans. presumably beans fell or were jettisoned from railroad. Total area in beans about 50 x 30 malodorous feet, more on berm side...Within relatively short distance, about 150 railroad ties in canal...and should be removed...Lock No. 57. Water in lock, being upstream end of swamp. Lockhouse in poor condition; roof and floor gone, and much of siding; logs exposed. Indigo Neck Hiker-Biker Overnighter adjacent to lock clean and well serviced...Little Orleans Camp Area at 140.77 has facilities for 16 vehicles with tables and fire-places. Water, toilets. On lower level, unpaved boat ramp and trailer parking....Additional campsite without improvements, on upriver bank of creek...Little Orleans General Store located immediately on far side of railroad, accessible via bridge over towpath and road under railroad culvert. Store offers groceries, gasoline, sandwiches & light meals, boat and canoe rental, bait, hunting & fishing licenses & supplies, ice, phone, 5-room apartment for emergency use by large groups as well as individuals, canal souvenirs...some topographic maps..." (A fine job, Don) Also Towpath Guides.

LEVEL WALKERS REPORT (Continued)

53 Little Orleans to Lock 59. Would like a Co-Level Walker on this section. Let me know if you are interested. John Urquhart is the Level Walker.

54/55 Misses Doris Bailey and Dorothy Johnson Lock 59 to Lock 60 (146.6)/Lock 60 to Green Ridge Station (149.7) sent in corrections and additions to the basic notes, reporting that "...A Hiker-Biker Overnighter has been constructed between the canal and the Potomac...The concrete waste weir has been reconstructed very recently...There is a noticeable lack of litter...The wildflowers are profuse..."

58 Alan Franklin Lock 63 1/3 to Paw Paw (154.5 is the new Vice President of the C & O Canal Association. Congratulations!! Alan commented in a recent letter, "...There's a side issue that perhaps Level Walkers might be able to contribute to. The Potomac, as were all streams on the East Coast, was the site of Indian settlements and occupation for thousands of years...It is perhaps possible that some of the Level Walkers have either themselves found and collected artifacts from along the River in various sections, or have been told of others who have notable collections or know about places where artifacts are to be found...I wonder whether it might be possible to ask the Level Walkers to include any such information they come upon in their reports? We could be of use in helping to get the information on to the proper places..."

61 Lynn and Judy Dehart Town Creek Aqueduct to Lock 68 (162.3). "...On the river side of Town Creek Aqueduct a stone must have been pushed into the creek. The Park Service has replaced it with a block of cement that was poured in the missing hole...East of mileage marker 164 there is a dead cow..smell is really something..Lock 68, house and Hiker-Biker still in good shape..."

62 Bruce and Sherry Wood Lock 68 to Lock 71 (Oldtown) (164.8) in their first report made update of the original notes. For those who may be interested, "...Isaac Long lives in Paw Paw, W. Va. The lockhouse is in good shape but is unoccupied. There is now a camping area with two out-houses, one working pump, and one picnic table. The canal is rewatered between Locks 68 and 71 to its original operating level..Lockhouse at Lock 71 in good shape...This lock was originally lined with kyanized wood which is completely missing. It is probably the best example of this type construction in this area...All four locks in this section are in good shape. ...The towpath itself is wide and well maintained, with some crude pot-hole repair work done with broken shale rock fill..." (Report included a good bird lisitng. A fine report.)

65 David Downtown Spring Gap to North Gap (173.4) reports towpath poor in Spring Gap area. Lift Lock 72: "All around this site through the narrows is a large amount of trash. Blue Spring also affected by such dumping. Lift Lock 74; Lockhouse in bad status. Lock 75: Lockhouse deteriorating.

66 North Branch to Pipe Line (175.6) needs a Level Walker.

69 Walter Ensminger Wiley Ford to Cumberland (182.6) reports exposed roots make it rough for cyclers"...Section of berm sideand Queen Street used for bow and arrow practice, some targets in direction of canal..."