

# ALONG THE TOWPATH

VOLUME VII

January 1975

No. 1

## ANNUAL REUNION HIKE

The 1975 Annual Justice Douglas Hike will be held on Saturday, April 26, 1975. It will cover the Canal between Harpers Ferry and Point of Rocks. It will return to the traditional one-day affair, though something may be scheduled for Sunday for those who are interested.

The business meeting will be held in Harpers Ferry on Friday night, April 25. The Annual Hike will begin Saturday morning, April 26. Transportation will be available from Point of Rocks for a nominal fee. The banquet will probably be held in Harpers Ferry on Saturday night, April 26. Details of all this and a reservation form will be made available in the next issue of "Along the Towpath."

## FOR YOUR CALENDAR

The C&O Canal National Historical Park Advisory Commission meetings for 1975 are scheduled for the second Saturday of every other month, as follows: January 11, March 8, May 10, July 12, September 13, and November 8. The public is welcome to attend. The meetings begin at 9:00 a.m. at the National Park Service Mather Center in Harpers Ferry.

- March 29 - Study Hike - History and Wildflowers - Sycamore Landing to Fort Harrison Island and return. Meet 9:30 a.m. Sycamore Landing Parking area. Leaders: Virgil Smirnow and Napier Shelton. Bring Lunch and binoculars.
- April 26 - Annual Reunion Hike - see above and the next "Along the Towpath."
- May 17 - Study Hike - Natural History - Dam Number 4 Slackwater. Meet 9:30 a.m. at McMahon's (Charles') Mill. Charles Otstot leader. Bring sneakers or rubber boots for possible wading. Bring lunch and binoculars.
- June 15 - History Study Hike - Antietam Aqueduct to Snyders Landing plus Antietam Battlefield. Meet 9:30 a.m. Antietam Camp Area. Leader: John Frye. Bring Lunch.

## MEMBERSHIP

All 1974 Association members who wish to remain members in good standing (there is no other kind!) must pay their 1975 dues of \$5.00 (regular) or \$10.00 (patron). A membership renewal form is enclosed in this newsletter, please complete it as appropriate and send it to the Association Treasurer, Douglas M. Greene, 10317 Brunswick Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland 20902. If there is no form attached, please tell Doug your current address and how you wish to have your name appear on the new membership badge.

## BADGES

Speaking of membership badges: The vote for a new membership badge was overwhelmingly in favor of a die struck metal badge, with many votes also for a cloth badge in addition. A final quote was obtained for the metal badge, but it was extremely high - in the area of \$12.00 per badge. So, we looked at other choices and have come up with a good looking (better than the existing badge, perhaps not as good as metal) plastic badge which will be sent to all 1975 members at the rate of one per \$5.00 membership, with extras available at a cost of \$1.00 each. Also, a new cloth badge has been ordered,

also at a cost of \$1.00 to the members. Only one plastic badge per \$5.00 membership is free, all cloth badges and additional plastic badges are \$1.00 each. These are not yet in our hands, but we expect to distribute them prior to the April hike.

#### ADVISORY COMMISSION

As noted, Commission meetings will be on the second Saturday of every other month during 1975 and are open to the public (see schedule on Page 1). The latest meeting, in Harpers Ferry on November 23, reviewed the status of the Master Plan, now combined with an Environmental Impact Statement -- public hearings are expected in early to mid-1975; sorry, no schedule available yet. The Paw Paw Bends logging has been stopped pending submission and approval of a sediment control plan. The State has made an offer for the property which has been refused and condemnation is proceeding.

The City of Cumberland put forth a proposal for a recreational park between the canal and river in the Candoc area. Land acquisition boundary maps are available at the Antietam and National Capital Parks headquarters offices. Members may review them if they wish. Land acquisition is 85% complete, with completion anticipated by June 30, 1975. Lorenzo Jacobs has been appointed as the new commissioner from the District of Columbia, replacing James Banks.

Catoctin Creek Aqueduct stabilization was nearly complete in November. The Woodmont Culvert (Mile 135.17) is being almost completely rebuilt. Monocacy, Tonoloway, Sideling Hill, Fifteen Mile, and Evitts Creeks Aqueducts are scheduled for full to partial stabilization with FY 1975 funding. These funds will not permit reconstruction of any of the aqueducts. Locks 23, 48, and 54 are scheduled, or have been, to be filled with earth pending funds for repairs. Other structures are scheduled for stabilization and/or repair.

#### NPS - LEVEL WALKER MEETING

On December 6 a joint meeting of the National Park Service and the Level Walkers was held in Glen Echo. There was a small turnout on the part of the Level Walkers, but there was a good discussion during the evening anyway. Much of the conversation was oriented to the lower portion of the canal because most of the NPS personnel and the Level Walkers were from or assigned to this area. The next meeting is to be held on January 10 at the Antietam Visitors Center. A report of that meeting will appear in the next newsletter.

#### VOLUNTEERS, ANYONE?

The Association is occasionally asked to provide a speaker for various types of civic group meetings in the Canal Area. To date such speakers have been provided on an ad hoc basis, usually with the person being asked making the presentation. The Association would like to receive the names of volunteers who would be willing to provide a presentation for various groups with or without slides. An outline of items to discuss could be provided by the Association, as well as a set of slides. Please contact Bruce Wood, 6200 Winnebago Road, Bethesda, Maryland 20016, if you are interested. A roster of volunteers will be assembled and only upon mutual agreement will anyone be expected to provide a presentation. Anyone willing to contribute original or duplicate slides to assemble a show on the canal should also contact Bruce Wood.

#### MAINTENANCE PROBLEMS ?

On the canal, that is. Don Foster, Chief of Maintenance for the Georgetown to Seneca section has asked anyone who notices maintenance problems along this area to call him at 299-3622. You should include a description of the problem, its location, and how long you have observed it to be a problem. If you are also a Level Walker, either advise the Level Walker of the section or send in a report on it.



## INTRUSIONS

Two examples of Association member action regarding actions adversely affecting the C&O Canal have come up in recent months. These demonstrate the need for all members to be alert to and aware of intruding activities which violate the nature of the National Historical Park we have. The first action was related to the Paw Paw Bends logging activities (see previous newsletters for details) which began in May 1974. The first reaction by some people informed of the logging was that it was outside the scope of the Park jurisdiction, but persistent investigation by a few members of the Association determined that no sediment control plan had been filed with the State of Maryland and that it was therefore a violation of State regulations. This logging has therefore been stopped for the present and everyone hopes the State will move to condemn the property before such a plan can be formed and approved. The State has already made several offers to purchase the property which have been refused.

The second such intrusion, also logging in a flood plain, was noted above Swains Lock during October. The NPS was advised that an entire island in the Potomac had been cut over by the owner (for a better view -- and he left all the trees on the island!). They looked at it and decided they could do nothing since it was in the river. The incident was noted in the NPS-Level Walker meeting of December 6. Ed Wesely learned about it and checked with the State of Maryland the following Monday. The State had not heard of it and sent an inspector out on Tuesday. By the end of the week the property owner had been advised of the violation of the State's sediment control regulation and was instructed to remove all of the trees from the island.

Ed advises us that any modification of the flood plain such as clearing, logging, etc, requires a State permit. Obstructions in a flood plain are against State regulations. If you should notice any modification or obstruction of a flood plain on the Maryland side of the river or on any of the islands in the river (they all belong to Maryland) please advise either or all: the Maryland Water Resources Administration; Ed Wesely (301) 652-3119; and Nancy Long (301) 229-0196. They will need to know where the modification occurs, when it happened if you know, and what its nature is. Of course, if it is definitely within the National Park, the NPS should be advised (301) 432-5124.

## ASSOCIATION OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

The annual business meeting this year will include the election of a new slate of officers and one-third of the Board of Directors, each to three-year terms. The present officers are: Carl Linden, President; Alan Franklin, First Vice-president; Bruce Wood, Second Vice-president, and Level Walker Chairman; Nancy Long, Secretary; and Douglas Greene, Treasurer. Carl and Alan have indicated their desire not to be re-nominated as officers. The Directors whose terms expire are: Jacob Berkson, John Chandler, Grant Conway, William Davies, and Thomas Hahn. All may be re-elected to new three-year terms or any may be replaced by new members. The total number on the Board is presently 15.

Association members are invited to send their preferences for nomination to any of the above positions to the Nominating Committee, which consists of Carl Linden, 6406 Ridge Drive, Brookmont, Washington, D.C. 20016; and Alan Franklin, 6510 Ridge Drive, Brookmont, Washington, D. C. 20016.

## C & O CALENDARS

Marta and Dave Kelsey (she was one of our logistics drivers during the Spring hike) have assembled an attractive calendar of black and white photographs of the Canal. Several of the photographs were taken during the Spring hike and a few show the hikers. Copies may be obtained from the Kelseys for \$2.00 each at: 120 South Adams, Rockville, Maryland 20850.



LEVEL WALKER REPORTS

John Frye has volunteered to be the History Advisor for the Level Walkers, along with Grant Conway. Please feel free to call upon them or any of the other Advisory Level Walkers to assist you with your reporting.

Mile

5.0 Lock 5 to Cabin John Creek, Philip J. Stone reports good to very good towpath, locks in good shape, a new footbridge at Cabin John, continuing pollution along Cabin John Creek, beavers below Lock 7, and increasing visitor use.

12.3 Cropley to Great Falls, Helen Johnston notes that the stop gate in the stop lock above Widewater has been removed, apparently to permit work on the locks immediately below the gate. She reports useage by some 5,000 people on a good summer day! Beavers are active here, also. This section is apparently a good indicator of spring flora and fauna along the entire canal.

14.3 Great Falls to Swains Lock, John Anderson also reports heavy hiker and biker use. Tom Hahn's new Section 1 guide book (revision of the original) is reported to be accurate for this section. Larry Harris and Family confirm John's report of good towpath conditions. They also remark on the excellent shape of almost all aspects of the canal and its related structures.

39.4 Lock 26 to Monocacy Aqueduct, Anson Courter congratulates PEPCO on a fine job of repairing and rewatering the canal after removal of the flyash. He thinks a one half percent finders fee is in order for finding PEPCO's flyash, donated to the Association, of course.

65.1 Dargan Quarry to Mountain Lock, The Randolph Wilson Family report excellent towpath, a great vista of the West Virginia shore at 66.5, and solitude away from the drive-in areas.

69.4 Antietam Aqueduct to Shepherdstown, Ken Rollins says, "All's Well." The remains of Agnes are gone, debris in the prism from pre-Agnes was cleaned out by the flood and not replaced to any great extent, and generally a good section.

76.7 Snyders Landing to Marsh Run Culvert, Art and Hal Cramer report only two minor problems -- a rut at 81.1 and erosion at 78.9.

81.6 Marsh Run Culvert to Dam 4, the Kenneth Robinsons note good hiking, but that soft sand would make biking difficult. No drinking water at the hiker-biker in this section. Wild flowers are common.

84.4 Dam 4 to Charles Mill, the Hal Vreeland Family notes hardly a sign of Agnes damage, general improvement over 18 months ago, no new rockfalls, and moderate use.

88.1 Charles Mill to Lock 43, Charles Otstot reminds us that along most of his section (as with the section immediately downstream) the canal is in the river and the towpath is a narrow path along the river. His troop cleaned the area of vegetation blocking the towpath and of trash. Howell's Cave has been re-opened. Mel Kaplan reports that the road access to Lock 43 is indeed private and that the owner posted it because of excessive and careless use of the access. NPS has apparently acquired property near Falling Waters so that visitors may reach the canal without attempting to get through the private access there.

99.3 Williamsport to Pinesburg Station, Mel Kaplan notes that the capstones on the culvert near Pinesburg Station are about to fall and some of the arch is weak. The towpath is again reported to be in excellent condition.



108.6 Lock 47 to McCoy's Ferry, A. K. McGraw advises that towpath conditions remain good and camp sites are busy, especially on weekends. Stanley Love reporting on this section and the next one upstream, notes also that the towpath is in good shape, but roots and stones are sometimes hard on bikers.

127.3 Roundtop Hill to Lock 53, Ralph French also has excellent towpath. He notes no recent changes along the section, but does advise that the bench at milepost 129 is missing.

146.6 Lock 59 to Lock 60, Doris Bailey and Dorothy Johnson have clean towpath with no litter. Leaves hide rocks on the towpath but otherwise no problems are reported. Very little water in the section this autumn.

151.2 Green Ridge Station to Lock 61, Jeremy Parker has a "no news is good news" report. But how can anyone else tell with no reports? The trailer camps on the West Virginia shore look better than last spring, thanks to leaves on the trees at the time of the visit. The towpath needs resurfacing.

153.1 Lock 61 to Lock 63 1/3, The Joseph Flynn Family notes remains of a lock gate near 153.8. They could not locate the lockhouse at Lock 63 1/3.

154.5 Lock 63 1/3 to Maryland Route 51, Alan and Kit Franklin warn of the likelihood of some brickwork inside the tunnel falling due to erosion of the mortar. They investigated the logging site on the Paw Paw Bends and report bull-dozer work done "with wild and indiscriminate abandon." Where the timbering actually took place, on the slope to the floodplain, the area looks like a battlefield with trees pushed aside to reach larger ones, unwanted parts of the larger trees left where they were cut, etc. Some of the cut trees were 70 years old and the entire area was well established forest. Many big trees still stand with blue paint marks, which probably indicated those to be felled, thanks to action by the Association and our Congressman. Back at the tunnel, a small slide occurred near the South Portal (upstream), but apparently no further damage was done to the portal. The downstream entrance wall of Lock 64 2/3 is badly deteriorating.

164.8 Lock 68 to Oldtown, Bruce and Sherry Wood had the advantage of Bill Davies' geology study hike on their section to gather some history, albeit ancient. Locks 68 through 71 (and other composite locks) used local Oriskany Sandstone. The rock outcrop near Lock 68 is one end of an anticline extending to near mile 169, the middle being eroded away. The layers in this outcrop are: Oriskany Sandstone, Coeyman's Limestone, Keyser Limestone, and Tonoloway Limestone (the latter one not visible here). Similar formations are found all the way to Roundtop Hill, rising and falling along the Canal's route. More beavers (not pre-historic) in the turning basin - there is a recent lodge there.

173.4 Spring Gap to North Branch, Nettie and Leroy Saville again call the towpath good but with roots. The locks are in good shape, but the lockhouse at Lock 72 needs some attention. The Spring Gap and North Branch areas were well used.

182.6 Wiley Ford to Intake Lock, Cumberland, Robert Gormer reports good towpath, although reminding us that the flood control work destroyed evidence of the canal from 183.55 to the western end. He provided a good report on all aspects of the section.

ALONG THE TOWPATH

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