

ALONG THE TOWNPATN

Volume VII

May, 1975

Number 3

ANNUAL HIKE

The 21st Annual Justice Douglas Reunion Hike was very successful. Approximately 600 people participated on a perfect day. A business meeting was held the evening before, with dinner being prepared for 35 people. New Officers and Directors were elected. They are listed later in this issue, together with their addresses. The banquet following the hike was prepared by the ladies auxiliary of the Friendship Fire Hall in Harpers Ferry. Over 200 people attended.

The preceding week was wet, but clearing skies Friday afternoon made for a very pleasant outdoor dinner and bonfire-side business meeting that evening. In addition to the elections, various reports were presented and there was a discussion of the Association's new task of considering legal action when appropriate to ensure proper consideration of the historical nature of the Canal on the part of various agencies.

Saturday's hike was greeted by clear skies and perfect temperature. The hikers saw bad and good aspects of the towpath--parts used as highways, others as walking trails; decrepit shacks and buses, lockhouses and attractive dwellings--and the collapsed Catoctin Aqueduct. Lunch was provided at Brunswick's city park. NPS buses were kindly provided after discussions with the Chessie System for the use of passenger equipment failed. The cocktail hour was held at the Mather Center shortly before the banquet.

Congressman Goodloe Byron participated in the first part of the hike while Congressman Gilbert Gude hiked the entire distance and spoke at the banquet.

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS!

On Sunday, June 15, there will be a meeting of the Association's new Officers and Board of Directors, followed by a potluck dinner, and a Level Walker-National Park Service meeting. All members and families are invited to join in on all three activities.

The afternoon fun will be held at the Washington Monument State Park (one mile north of U.S. 40, Alternate between Boonsboro and Middletown.) We will use group area Number 1. The board meeting will begin at 3:00 p.m. and is open to all members. The potluck dinner (bring a covered dish and your own utensils - drinks will be available for purchase at cost) will begin at approximately 5:00 p.m. The Level Walker meeting will begin at approximately 7:00 p.m. and you should be able to be on your way home before 9:00 p.m.

The park has its own attractions in addition to being immediately adjacent to the Appalachian Trail for those who do not wish to attend all meetings. This afternoon gathering will provide excellent opportunities for members to see what the Board of Directors does, to meet other members, and to meet the NPS summer and permanent personnel.

Bonnie Troxell, the new President, invites submissions for the agenda. Send them before June 15, to her in Cumberland. John Howard, the new Level Walker Chairman, wants to meet everyone he will be working with during the next few years. Please, Y'all come!

OFFICERS 1975 - 78

Mrs. Bonnie Troxell, President*
612 Montgomery Avenue
Cumberland, Maryland 21502
(301) 724-7725

Miss Nancy Long, First Vice-President
6001 Bryn Mawr Avenue
Glen Echo, Maryland 20768
(301) 229-0196

Mr. John Howard
Second Vice-President & Level Walker
Chairman
10598 Jason Court
Columbia, Maryland 21043
(301) 730-4489

Mr. & Mrs. Alan Hedin (Becky), Secretary
47 Shaw Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20904
(301) 622-3985

Mr. Douglas Greene, Treasurer
10317 Brunswick Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20902
(301) 649-5766

Ms. Barbara Yeaman, Information Officer
113 Valley Drive, Brookmont
Washington, D.C. 20016
(301) 229-6147

*Bonnie Troxell was nominated and elected President after Bruce Wood had to decline the nomination due to a conflict of interest.

NEW DIRECTORS

Mr. William Davies
125 West Greenway Boulevard
Falls Church, Virginia 22046

Mr. Grant Conway
6032 Broad Street, Brookmont
Washington, D.C. 20016

Mr. John Chandler
6718 Persimmon Tree Road
Bethesda, Maryland 20034

Mr. Bruce Wood
6200 Winnebago Road
Bethesda, Maryland 20016

Mr. Thomas Hahn - in process of moving to Shepherdstown, address not known.

COMMISSION MEETINGS

The next C & O Canal Advisory Commission meeting is scheduled for July 12, at the National Park Service training center, the Mather Center, in Harpers Ferry. Everyone is invited.

March 15 - The General Plan, Environmental Assessment was discussed and a hearing schedule agreed to. One public hearing will be held in each county and the District of Columbia. The schedule is: May 7, Cumberland City Hall; May 14, Antietam Battlefield Headquarters; May 21, Brunswick Town Hall; May 28, Glen Echo Town Hall; and June 4, Palisades, Washington, D.C. Further details may be obtained at (202) 426-6715. The hearing record closes July 7.

There was a review of the criteria for and the methods of historic preservation. A structure can be adaptive, used, or not used; it may be restored to original appearance or can use actual components. The C & O Canal structures would mostly call for adaptive use and in many cases ruins should be stabilized and not restored. There is a new parking lot off Maryland Route 51 to provide access to the Paw Paw Tunnel.

May 10 - There is a Maryland Potomac Scenic River bill before the Maryland Legislature. No construction funds are in the FY 1976 C & O Canal budget, but some are in the transition period (July 1 - September 30, 1976) budget. Maryland is buying the lower four miles of the Monocacy River shoreline as a conservation area.

JOURNEY DOWN THE POTOMAC

Congressman Gilbert Gude is planning to spend the month of August traveling the length of the Potomac River (some 386 miles), from Fairfax Stone to Point Lookout. He will walk, canoe, bicycle, ride a coal train, etc., while slowly proceeding down the river. He is planning to visit sites of historical interest, economic significance, problem areas, successful projects, and protected and unprotected resources. He will have a select group of a half-dozen specialists in various fields accompany him on the trip.

Details are still being worked out, but presently call for being in the Cumberland area on August 9, the Williamsport area on August 14, Harpers Ferry on August 17, and Washington on August 23. Anyone is most welcome to join him for part or all of the trip, but you will have to provide your own logistical support. Mr. Gude cannot be responsible for anyone outside his core group.

REPAIRS

The National Park Service has announced a detour around Fifteen Mile Creek Aqueduct until later in 1975 for stabilization of the aqueduct. The detour is marked by signs. A contract will be let shortly on the Monocacy Aqueduct, and a detour will be necessary there also during the summer. As indicated in an earlier "Along the Towpath", several aqueducts are scheduled for stabilization work this year and other detours may be required. Please bear with the NPS; stabilization is a necessary minimum step toward saving those valuable structures.

WASHINGTON COUNTY TOURS

Every Saturday afternoon from May 3 through October 11, 1975, the Washington County Tourism Division runs bus tours of the county. The tour leaders are John Frye and/or his son, Dennis. The cost is \$4.00 for adults, \$2.00 for children. Reservations are required and can be made by calling (301) 731-0110, Extension 203, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. The tour leaves the Sheraton Motor Inn at 12:30 p.m. and returns at 5:30 p.m.

Among the sites visited are: Washington Monument State Park, Gathland State Park, John Brown Farm, the C & O Canal, Antietam Battlefield, the Hager House, and the Miller House.

LEVEL WALKERS

John Howard, 10598 Jason Court, Columbia, Maryland 21043, (301) 730-4489, is the new Level Walker Chairman. All reports and request for assignments should be sent to him. This became effective at the May 3 Business Meeting.

LEVEL WALKER REPORTS

Mile

2.3 Old Boat Incline to Lock 5, Marilyn DeLoach - Cool weather, less use than last year, generally good towpath conditions are reported. She suggests taking a 200 mm lens for your 35 mm camera to get a great picture of the Washington Monument from near the Old Boat Incline. She also suggests everyone contribute to a listing of public telephones in their sections which could be published for emergency use. Just tell where the telephone is. If local emergency numbers vary, these would be good, also.

5.0 Brookmont to Cabin John, Philip Stone - Lock 5 to Lock 10 towpath is being resurfaced. The dirt stockpile was near Cabin John Creek and is now being distributed. He notes many bicyclists on weekends and suggests alternate paths for either hikers or bikers.

12.3 Cropley to Great Falls, Helen Johnston - She reports work on the stop lock and the two major breaks in the Widewater area. The stop lock work is nearly complete, but the breaks will take longer. The construction has disturbed many plants and some animal habitats, which Helen hopes will recover once the disturbance has gone; but some of which will be changed forever. Usage of the Great Falls Tavern area continued heavy all winter and was "wall-to-wall people" at the tavern in spring.

16.6 Swains Lock to Pennyfield Lock, Joan Paull - The towpath is muddy and has numerous puddles above Mile 19, the Pennyfield parking area is very small when wet, and there is some erosion of the towpath wall on the river side in various places along the section. Swains Lock rents bicycles, canoes, and row boats. There are hourly rates for each. The daily rate is: Bicycles, \$3.00; Tandem bicycles, \$6.00; Canoes, \$4.50; Boats, \$3.50.

22.8 Seneca Aqueduct to Tenfoot Island, Joseph Paull and Russell Baker - The towpath is in fine condition, the hiker-biker sign damaged and the area littered. They hauled out about five trashbags of litter, mostly beverage cans, during their walk.

25.0 Tenfoot Island to Sycamore Landing, Alan and Becky Hedin - Their visit was made during the winter and was received too late for the March issue. They reported melting snow creating muddy towpath--rain would do the same now--and difficult walking. Their section is one of the best for spring wildflowers.

42.2 Monocacy Aqueduct to Noland's Ferry, Robert and Terry Ledley - The aqueduct railing, in their opinion, could stand to have a lower bar added or wire put in to protect small children (of course, the iron railing presents no such problem). Horses were used while the towpath was wet, leaving deep prints. The Tuscarora Creek Culvert is damaged and parts of it are deceptively secure, possibly leading to problems. They report loose dogs, as do other Level Walkers, which are in violation of NPS ordinances and of some County regulations--all dogs must be leashed for the safety of everyone concerned!

48.2 Point of Rocks to Catoclin Aqueduct, Marie Grenan - The footbridge across Catoclin Creek (upstream of the collapsed aqueduct) is now completed. Much of the towpath was flooded in late March and the house at the Pivot Bridge had 16 inches of water over its floor. Marie was in the area shortly after the high water and reports very muddy towpath and much debris.

62.3 Dam 3 to Dargan Quarry to Mountain Lock, Dot and Jack Geary - To quote them in their entirety: "No changes have occurred. All is well."

72.8 Shepherdstown to Lock 39, John Frye - The same March flood that affected other parts of the Canal topped the towpath here, too. Debris is again noted. There was no real damage to the section except for a lot of silt in the canal just above Lock 39. There is a new footbridge across Lock 38.

84.4 Dam 4 to Charles Mill, Steve Parks and Robert Dodds - Both reported at the same time, but reported basically different things, which makes for complete coverage. Steve noted fallen trees having been cut away from the towpath, good towpath conditions as far as they went, and many spring flowers. Robert noted a new rockfall near 87.5 (several tons in addition to what he reported in November, 1973), a stranded houseboat at 88.06, and a ranger on duty at the Dam 4 nature center.

105.0 Old Railroad Station to Dam 5, Hooper Wolfe - 22 feet of water above normal are reported to have been in the area in late March. Very little damage occurred. He notes an "ice breaker" --a man-made peninsula to resist the full force of the river from the towpath in the vicinity of Mile 105. There is another near Mile 98 below Lock 44. These were put in by the Canal company.

106.8 Dam 5 to Lock 47, Charles Morrison - He sent in a report the day of the high water in the Williamsport area to note that Conococheague Creek was significantly higher than the Potomac River and was putting much pressure on the aqueduct. This was the first time he had observed this phenomenon and allows it to building and paving in the drainage area of the creek, causing faster runoff. The aqueduct survived this flood, but without taking this into consideration, it and others may be damaged in the future. The Four Locks area tunnel was flooded and parts of the towpath below there were flooded.

108.6 Lock 47 to McCoy's Ferry, A. K. McGraw - The conditions had not changed much since his last report. The Mule Stable at Four Locks is being restored.

136.6 Sideling Hill Creek Aqueduct to Little Orleans, Don Ramsey - He notes that Lockhouse 57 has been damaged by a tree falling against it. The Indigo Neck Hiker-Biker has a water purifier and a tree has been cut down, leaving both seats and firewood, both needed items at Hiker-Bikers. There was considerable usage of the Little Orleans individual camp area, but none of the group area.

151.2 Green Ridge Station to Lock 61, Jeremy and Christopher Parker - Another report shortly following on the heavy rains and moderate flooding--must have been a good time to get out! The towpath here was not flooded, but they estimate the water level to be about the same as during Agnes. They note that the river reached 22.3 feet at Hancock, against a normal of 7.9 feet, but was only 2.2 feet above flood level at Washington when it got to Little Falls.

164.8 Lock 68 to Oldtown, Bruce and Sherry Wood - The towpath is generally in good shape. It is still used by NPS between Locks 70 and 71 to reach the maintenance shed at Lock 71. The pit toilet at Potomac Forks Hiker-Biker has been removed and replaced with a chemical toilet, the latter being immediately on the towpath. This is a new policy NPS is converting to; let's hope they do better in placement of future chemical toilets.

V O L U N T E E R S

Marilyn DeLoach, 3206 Wisconsin Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20016, (202) 363-0650, is coordinating speaker volunteers and speaker requests. If you would like to offer to speak and (if you wish) present a slide show on the canal, contact her. If you would like to have a C&O Canal representative tell your group about the Canal, contact her.

Lyman Stucker, 2811 Farm Road, Alexandria, Virginia 22302, (703) 549-3527, has offered to schedule study hikes in the future. These have been rather popular (12 to 18 hikers on each one) and are most interesting. If you would like to offer to lead a study hike on any section of the Canal (5 to 10 miles), contact him. If you would like to see a hike held on some part of the Canal or about some aspect of history or natural history, contact him. If, in the latter case, you can suggest a possible leader, all the better.

John Frye, Gapland, Maryland 21736, is now a history advisor as well as Level Walker. He joins Grant Conway in that capacity. Other advisors include: Bill Davies, Geology; Napier Shelton, birds; and Robert Dodds and Charles Morrison, Engineering. Please feel free to consult with them at any time and perhaps arrange to walk your section with them.

ALONG THE TOWPATH
1900 Bedford Street
Cumberland, Maryland 21502



Mr. John C. Frye
Gapland, Maryland 21736