



C&O Canal Association

along the towpath . . .

concerned with the conservation of the natural and
historical environment of the C&O Canal and the Potomac River Basin

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REUNION HIKE UPDATE . . .

ONLY THE LOCATION HAS BEEN CHANGED!

On second thought (and, no doubt, sober reflection) the 1980 reunion hike committee decided that the 16 miles it initially selected for the hike was too formidable a distance, and a shorter hike would be more suitable. Accordingly, it selected a 12 mile hike starting at Seneca (mile 22.8) rather than at White's Ferry (mile 35.5). Fortunately, other details of the 26th annual reunion hike were safely subsumed under the general information on the hike in the last issue of Along the Towpath. Details are provided below.

The 26th annual reunion hike will begin at 9:30 AM on Saturday, April 26, 1980 at Seneca and continue downstream to Carderock (mile 10.8). The hike includes the Pennyfield level, the level walked by the late William O. Douglas. Although the Association's annual reunion hike has long been known as the "Justice Douglas" hike, on this year's hike we take note of the recent death of the man who raised a loud and courageous voice from a high federal position, leading the way to the preservation of the C & O Canal as a public treasure.

There will be bus transportation from Carderock to Seneca before the start of the hike. Persons desiring to make use of the bus service should park in the public parking area at Carderock. There will be three buses, leaving from the upstream end of the parking area as they are filled, transporting hikers to Seneca between 7:45 AM and 9:30 AM. The last bus will leave Carderock at 9:30 AM. Bus riders will be charged \$1 per person, payable upon boarding the bus. No reservations are required for bus transportation.

A bag lunch (sandwich, fruit, cookie) will be available at Swain's lock (about halfway), provided by either the Vienna Girl Scouts or Rockville High School, for \$2 per person, if reserved and paid for in advance. In addition, the snack bar at Swain's lock will be open with its usual fare of snacks and beverages.

The social hour with cash bar (no reservations) will be held at Carderock, at the upstream end of the parking area. In the event of light rain, we will raise a tarp; if rain is heavy, the social hour will be removed to St. Francis Hall in Potomac. The social hour will last for two hours, 4-6 PM.

The evening banquet will be held at 6:30 PM in St. Francis Hall, located at the St. Francis Episcopal Church, River and Councilman Roads, Potomac, Md. The cost is \$10 per person, with reservations and payment in advance. St. Francis Church is located one block east of the intersection of River Road (Md. 190) and Falls Road (Md. 189). There is parking in the rear of the property, and St. Francis Hall is a wing of the building with an entrance in the rear. The menu will include ham and turkey. Speakers at the banquet will be

US Congressman Barnes(8th-Md), Cathy Douglas and US Senator Mathias(Md).

Camping will be available at the Izaak Walton League (entrance from Willard Rd. near River Road between Poolesville and Sycamore Landing) on Friday, April 25, 1980. Nath Hahn has offered to serve a simple dinner (perhaps chile) for \$2 per person to those who make advance reservations and payment. Dinner will be served between 5:30 PM and 7:30 PM. Persons must arrange for their own transportation to and from the Izaak Walton League. If you need more detailed directions to the Izaak Walton League, please call Ken Rollins(301-229-1513).

A form is enclosed in this issue of Along the Towpath for your use in making reservations for the Friday dinner, lunch during the hike, and the Saturday evening banquet.

DON'T FORGET THE BUSINESS MEETING

An Association business meeting will be held at 8:00 PM on Friday, April 25, 1980 at the Izaak Walton League near Poolesville. As reported in the last issue of Along the Towpath, the officers and 10 board members will be elected. John Chandler, chairman of the nominating committee, has announced that Midge Heimer and Dale Jackson are the other members of the committee. John(301-229-5948) and his committee members are still most interested in receiving names of potential nominees. Please let John hear from you soon, as meeting day is rapidly approaching.

AND DON'T FORGET YOUR DUES

Annual dues have been raised by Association officers and board members to \$8 for regular membership and \$15 for patrons. 1980 dues should be paid to Treasurer Emmie Johns. Please note that members will not receive a statement from the Association; let this reminder be sufficient. Why not include your dues with your reservations for the reunion hike?

Along the Towpath is published from time to time by the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Association, PO Box 66, Glen Echo, MD 20768. The Association is a nonprofit organization concerned with the conservation of the natural and historical environment of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal and the Potomac River basin.

Along the Towpath editor is Robert Greenspun, 316 E Mason Ave., Alexandria, VA 22301.

Association officers for 1979-1980 are:

President: Nancy Long, 6001 Bryn Mawr Ave., Glen Echo, MD 20768

First Vice President: John K. Howard, 10598 Jason Court, Columbia, MD 21043

Second VP and Level Walker Chairman: Lyman Stucker, 2811 Farm Rd., Alexandria, VA 22302

Secretary: Shirley Haigh, 1423 N Nash St.#9, Arlington, VA 22209

Treasurer: Emmie Johns, 6233 18th Rd., N., Arlington, VA 22205

Association Dues: One year \$8, patron \$15.

LEVEL WALKERS' MEETING AND HIKE

A Level Walkers' meeting will be held on Saturday, June 7, 1980, at 11:00 AM in the National Park Service's log cabin in the Paw Paw tunnel former brickyard. The brickyard is located just upstream of the Paw Paw tunnel, at the parking lot off of Md. route 51.

Carpoolers will leave at 8:30 AM from the parking lot of Korvette's department store on Rockville Pike in Rockville (use the Montrose exit eastbound from I-270). Attendees who desire lunch should bring their own; there is a small grocery store nearby.

Canal Park Superintendent Bill Failor will be attending the meeting.

After the meeting, at 12:30 PM, there will be a 4.8 mile hike from the brickyard downstream 2.4 miles (through the Paw Paw tunnel) to lock 62 and return. Bring a flashlight for safety in the tunnel. Lock 62, the half-way point of the hike, is an example of a wood-lined lock that is rapidly deteriorating.

If you are interested in stopping in Berkeley Springs at the Country Inn for supper, please call Barbara or Gary Nickerson (301-340-2076, Washington metro area). They will make reservations and answer questions about carpooling and the hike. Riders will be expected to contribute gas money to drivers.

LEVEL WALKER NOTES

Lyman Stucker

Owing to a busy schedule, Midge Heimer has resigned as a level walker. We will miss her valuable contributions.

Welcome to Gertrude Mahn, a new level walker. She and Betty Bushell walk level 22.

Although all level walker reports are not printed or summarized in Along the Towpath, each and every one of them is sent to the Park Service unabridged.

Keep those reports coming.

On the following pages are excerpts from some of the most recent reports.

Level 3 - Lock 5 to Cabin John Creek - Philip J. Stone

A recent resurfacing project has repaired the four places reported last May as having been seriously eroded by high water, and the towpath is now in first class condition throughout my section.

All locks (5,6,7), lockhouses (6,7), and bridges (Brookmont, Sycamore Island, and Cabin John) are in good shape, as is the comfort station at Brookmont.

Throughout my section water depth in the canal was in the 18"-24" range, except for the delta just above Sycamore Island Bridge caused by a small stream entering the canal.

This time, more than ever, I was impressed by the aesthetic impact of the canal and its environment. The gently curving waterway, flanked by its grey-brown towpath and a background of green, yellow, and red-leaved trees, combined with the autumn sunlight shimmering on the water and the wind-blown ripples to present a scene of serene beauty.

Level 8 - Swain's Lock to Pennyfield Lock - Joan Paull

What a good job the Park has done with the towpath since the big storm in the spring. It is now possible to bicycle the entire portion of the towpath. The berm looked good, only a few sticks and leaves by the foot bridge earth bank. The construction of the Potomac intake is well under way and the park has built a temporary dam to act as a road to haul supplies. This does not effect the path. The mule drink near Swain's is in good shape.

Level 12 - Sycamore Landing to Edwards Ferry - Charles M. Otstot

The towpath is in very good condition. The steady rains have left a number of standing puddles, but they are of interest only to the bikers. The puddles also showed, however, that no vehicles had been along the towpath for some time.

The Chisel Branch HBO is a MESS!!! The area has been flooded several this summer; the entire area is muddy. On this day, the river was still high, and was only a few feet below the lower level of the camping area. The picnic table was missing, and I suspect it is lodged in the float-some about 100 meters downstream.

The Youth Conservation Corps interpretive trail is not being maintained. If it will not be, I suggest that the signs be removed. The caution sign placed by the NPS warning of culvert repairs is also showing wear, and there is no sign of such work in the section.

Level 16 - Lock 26 to Monocacy Aqueduct - Anson and Frances Courter

Juncos and white throated sparrows have come down for the winter; saw one small flock of goldfinches and two bluebirds; also two pileated woodpeckers and two woodducks.

Had a cleanup job at Monocacy Aqueduct on the 20th, although I could not pick up the shattered glass. Cleaned up trash around three over-burned cans at the Monocacy Aqueduct. Probably dogs, maybe racoons; bears couldn't have scattered more.

Level 22 - Weverton to Harpers Ferry Lock 33 - Betty Bushell

The towpath has been restored to very good condition following severe erosion and washouts from Spring floods. The sizeable deposits of silt, rocks and sand near Lock 33 have been taken care of.

There is evidence of severe storm damage from the October snowstorm--many uprooted trees, shrubs and broken branches are lying in the canal bed and on the berm side. The towpath, however, is clear of debris. Park Service personnel are to be commended, as clearing operations must have been difficult.

Level 23 - Harpers Ferry to DAM 3 - Susan Henley (Butch)

Physical condition is good - little change since April '79. Although we saw no other people on this cold, snowy winter day, this section appears to get high usage due to its location near the historical Harpers Ferry.

The beautiful rocks across the canal were highlighted by lots of frozen water falls from the many springs.

Picked up one large bag of trash, mostly beer cans and bottles.

Level 26 - Mountain Lock to Antietam Aqueduct - Theresa B. Haddy

Both campgrounds were in excellent condition, with tables, garbage cans, toilets, and a bulletin board at the Mountain Lock entrance clean and in good repair. There was a small amount of litter. The towpath itself was in excellent condition, too, with no washouts, no large trees down across the path, and no obstructions of any sort.

Unfortunately, the large deposits of trash that I had noted on the far side of the canal during my last visit were still there. Although they did not appear to have been added to, they were as unsightly as ever.

Level 28 - Sheperdstown to Lock 39 - John C. Frye

On a rainy Sunday, 9/23/79, I led a group of 23 persons along this level as a part of Historic Shepherdstown Days. All but three were local, including two persons that once worked on the canal when it was still in operation. A fine group, all interested in the history of the canal and the area. I have been over this level at least a dozen times in the past year. The condition of the towpath and the locks are as good as possible under the present program.

Level 32 - Marsh Run Culvert to Dam 4 - Marvin Wilkerson

The towpath was in good condition. We had thought there might be some damage to trees from the early snowstorm but we observed none. The Big Woods HBO was in good shape and the pump operational. (We always wonder why the pump is at some distance from rest of HBO)

Edith reports about 10 varieties of birds observed, none of which were particularly unusual. No other wild life in evidence, except for some deer tracks.

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Level 33 - Dam 4 to MacMahon's Mill (Old Charles Mill) - Joseph N. Rowe

The upstream approximately 2 miles of this section above the inlet Lock consists of narrow towpath along the river bank which in most areas is very steep and rocky; particularly the last mile before coming to the mill. In some spots even difficult for two walkers to pass each other. On my last walk in 1978, many red surveyor's flags were noted indicating some possible future work to be done, but nothing yet. It would seem that any attempt to create and maintain a wider towpath at this point would be useless without great expense, since high water at this point, which is a slow bend of the river, would probably regularly destroy it.

Level 40 - Old RR Station to Dam 5 - Bud Morgan

The towpath was in good condition. It contains a minimum amount of roots and rocks. It is reasonably level and is very close to the river the whole distance of Section 40. It was damp but no muddy areas.

The canal prism of Section 40 was dry with no standing or "occasional" water. The canal appeared to have an average amount of fallen trees and tree limbs in varying states of decay.

Both sides of the towpath were completely clear of litter. There was some paper trash and beer bottles in the inlet lock under the towpath crossover at Dam 5. It appeared that all but one NPS trash can had been removed for the winter.

(Bud sent us a beautiful set of color pictures of "his" level. We shall include these in the historical record book - Editor)

Level 42 - Lock 47 to McCoys Ferry - A. K. McGraw

Towpath on this level in excellent condition. Also, no vandalism noted up to this date.

Met 28 members of Scout Troop 28 on bicycles from Philadelphia. Scout Master of that troop recommended that Mill Point Camp Grounds be taken off the map as it is no longer in use; also that Little Orleans Camp Site be marked better.

Level 43 - McCoys Ferry to Fort Frederick - Orrin Long

There were no significant changes in the condition of the towpath and its main structures since my last traverse in April 1979. Culverts are in good to excellent condition. Ruts in towpath were muddy, filled with standing water in many places.

Two does were seen at 112.1 miles. Groundhog crossed towpath at Milepost 112. Birds were out in profusion. Those identified included cardinal, black-capped chickadee, titmouse, downy woodpecker, quail, blue jay, crow. Many others unidentified.

An ideal location for a major NPS interpretive display about Canal history would be alongside the towpath near the bridge over the Canal that carries the road from Fort Frederick to the river.

Level 44 - Fort Frederick to Ernstville - Jane and Harold Larsen

The peace and quiet were broken only by the shotgun fire of two hunters we could see at the far edge of a wide cornfield between canal and river.

Evidence that horses had walked on the path recently. Never aware of equine use in this area before.

Wildlife observed: one turtle on towpath, one duck rising from the water of Big Pool, (unidentified) birds singing.

An abundance of blue asters and purple knotweed. A stand of majestic cattails, beautiful and inaccessible, at narrow west end of Big Pool. Never noticed before.

Level 50 - Lock 53 to Dam 6 - David Palmeter

Erosion noted on previous visit has been repaired. A group of a dozen bicyclists were the only users - odd for a sunny, warm (in the 80's) October day.

Little wildlife - one woodchuck and a lot of gray squirrels. The nearby orchards were teeming with apples.

Level 54 - Lock 59 to Lock 60 - Robert Woodall

Three ducks flew from the canal. One flicker; two downey woodpeckers; one phoebe; two hawks. One active ground hog burrow in middle of towpath. Several wildflowers in bloom, unable to specifically identify. Yellow flower, member of daisy or sunflower family. Need to study these a little more. Next time will bring wildflower book. Black snake at Lock 59. He stayed in one spot and protected his turf. There were several interesting large fungus formation on dead trees.

Level 60 - Culvert Opposite Little Cacapon to Town Creek-Muriel Olszewski

Considering all the rain that fell through the summer I found no bad spots. In areas (near Paw Paw tunnel) where sun was not getting chance to dry ground, there was some mushiness, but even then it was not bad for bicycling. I bicycled from the tunnel to Town Creek Aqueduct #10, then biked and hiked back.

(Muriel, with her report, included 3 sets of excellent pictures. They are a welcome addition to our records - Editor)

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IMPORTANT DATES AND TIMES

Friday, April 25, 1980

5:30 PM - 7:30 PM Nath Hahn's dinner at Izaak Walton League
8:00 PM Association Business meeting at Izaak Walton League

Saturday, April 26, 1980 Reunion Hike Day

7:45 AM - 9:30 AM Buses leave Carderock for Seneca
9:30 AM 26th Annual reunion hike begins at Seneca
Midday Bag lunch available at Swain's lock
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM Social hours with cash bar at Carderock
6:30 PM Banquet at St Francis Hall in Potomac

Saturday, June 7, 1980

11:00 AM Level walkers' meeting near Paw Paw
12:30 PM Hike from Paw Paw tunnel parking lot to lock 62 and return

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- o Final Reunion Hike Details
 - o Level Walker Reports