

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

VOLUME XII

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NUMBER 3

WANT MORE HIKES? OTHER ACTIVITIES? BECOME AN ORGANIZER!

During the 1980 reunion hike activities, some members discussed the possibility of an "Association-sponsored" hike in the fall, perhaps together with a general membership meeting. The annual reunion hike receives a high level of support from the Association: usually the President appoints a hike committee (5-20 people) to arrange for camping, parking, transportation, production of a flyer containing historical notes on the area to be hiked, lunch, a cash bar and a catered banquet with public figures as speakers. The hike is announced in Along the Towpath and publicized among nonmembers by distributing broadsides. All the Association member need do is mark his or her calendar and send away for reservations.

Level walkers' meetings and hikes are also "sponsored" by the Association, but generally do not involve so many different activities. The level walker chairperson (or his or her appointee) will announce a location and time. If there is to be a hike, persons not level walkers, or not interested in level walkers' meetings, will have to tolerate the meeting for the sake of the hike.

Since anyone can, at a moment's notice, make his or her way to the towpath, alone or with others, and hike a pleasing distance at a comfortable pace, it would seem no member need await an "official" Association activity to enjoy the Canal Park. Perhaps, then, there is a camaraderie of a higher order when a hundred or more Association members get together; perhaps there is the excitement of unanticipated conversation when people who would otherwise remain strangers pin on their Association badges and share their thoughts with each other as they explore the canal. Perhaps there are even more romanticized explanations.

The most serious barrier to more Association-sponsored activities is finding members with the inclination to help arrange for the various permits, transportation vehicles, supplies, caterers, campsites and whatever other things might be needed. People who are inclined to help usually can find the time to do so. But the same people cannot be expected to carry the load time after time. In our Association, very little new blood diffuses across the apparently formidable barrier separating the general members from the officers, board members, and regular activity organizers. The committee that organized the 1980 reunion hike cannot be expected to organize another hike in the fall.

We need other members to help out. To help arrange an Association activity 1) You don't have to be a born leader (there is work for the timid); 2) You don't have to do any more than you agree to do; and 3) You can get help from those members who have done it before. Making arrangements might turn out to be more satisfying than you anticipated.

Of course, in arranging for an activity (all Association-sponsored activities don't have to be hikes or meetings), the arrangers usually want to know who is going to show up—how many will come? Few, indeed, will want to work at making arrangements for a most diversified Canal Weekend only to discover an uninterested membership when the time arrives. The reunion hike committee is assured most of the members will show up; level walkers can be expected to come to level walkers' meetings. How will someone arranging a new activity estimate how many will attend?

I propose we use Along the Towpath as a bi-directional communications link, as follows.

Any member who wants to bring about an Association event (a hike, a lecture on a political issue affecting the Park, a weekend at Mather center learning about the Park Service, a day at Ferry Hill, an historical lecture on canal masonry, a towpath/prism/structure repair trip, etc.) would send a description of the proposed event to the Along the Towpath editor (or to a future "events coordinator" should this process become popular). This description, which would appear in a regular column in the newsletter, would set forth the details of the proposed event, including how many people are needed to help organize it, what they would have to do, the dates and deadlines involved, and how many members must show up to make the whole thing worthwhile. The proposer would provide his or her telephone number or mailing address for interested parties to respond.

After an appropriate interval, the proposer would again publish in the newsletter the status of the proposed event: "It's on for sure, rain or shine, 20 organizers volunteered and 100 members said they were interested." Or, "No one is interested. If I get two people to help by Oct. 1st we might hold it anyway without the dinner, but don't hold your breath." It is, of course, perfectly reasonable to ask members to make reservations and send money as needed, and these details could be spelled out in Along the Towpath.

So what about it? Any organizers out there? Write to your editor with ideas along the lines of those suggested above. I'll report on the fate of grass roots organizing in the next issue.

Along the Towpath is published from time to time by the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Association, P.O. Box 66, Glen Echo, MD 20768. The Association is a non-profit organization.

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

Association Officers for 1980-1981 are:

President: Barbara Yeaman, 104 Valley Road, Bethesda, MD 20016

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

Second VP & Level Walker Chairman: Lyman Stucker, 2811 Farm Road, Alexandria, VA

Secretary: Shirley Haigh, 1423 N Nash St #9, Arlington, VA 22209 22302

Treasurer: Emmie Woodward, 9017 Old Dominion Drive, McLean, VA 22102

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



COMING EVENTS ON OR NEAR THE CANAL

- August 8-10, 1980: Brunswick's Potomac River Festival. This is an annual event with railroad films, train rides and music. Write the Brunswick-Potomac River Foundation, Foundation Center, 40 West Potomac St, Brunswick, MD 21716, or call 301-834-7100.
- August 22-24, 1980: Williamsport C & O Canal Days. This event features street dancing, an ox roast, arts and crafts sales and a steam engine display. For details phone Mrs Elissa Slayman, 301-223-9729
- September 27, 1980: LEVEL WALKERS' HIKE. Tidelock to Carderock. See details elsewhere in this issue.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS TAKE THEIR PLACES

At the general membership meeting on April 25, 1980, five members were elected for terms expiring in 1982 and five for terms expiring in 1983. The following is a list of board members, their places of residence and the expiration dates of their terms:

Terms expiring in 1981

John Chandler, Montgomery County
 Bill Davies, Falls Church
 Tom Hahn, Jefferson County
 Lyman Stucker, Alexandria
 Bruce Wood, Washington City

Terms expiring in 1982

Bradley Haigh, Arlington
 Mel Kaplan, Washington County
 Joan Paull, Montgomery County
 Ken Rollins, Montgomery County
 Merle Van Horne, Washington City

Terms expiring in 1983

Vic Conrad, Washington County
 Ralph Donnelly, Washington County
 Carl Linden, Montgomery County
 Nancy Long, Montgomery County
 Bonnie Troxell, Allegany County

THE ONLY NEW OFFICER IS President Barbara Yeaman. Our treasurer hasn't changed; Emmie has just changed her name and address. Ellen Holway, 6214 Wagner Lane, Bethesda, MD 20016 is membership chairwoman.

DO YOU HAVE ANY CANAL-RELATED NEWS TO SHARE?

Your editor is not able to keep up with many happenings that would be of interest to the membership, and relies almost entirely on contributions alerting him to the occurrence of noteworthy events. The Association officers provide minutes of Board meetings, Officer meetings and various reports. The NPS provides minutes of the C & O Canal Advisory Commission meetings. If you, perchance, come upon an item of interest, send it to Along the Towpath, in care of the editor.

THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN...

Special Request for Membership Renewals

Our records indicate that, while 2/3 of our members have been loyal supporters of the C & O Canal Association in past years, they have not yet renewed their memberships for 1980.

As you know, we are not a formal organization with regular renewal notices sent as specific reminders, so it is easy to overlook or just plain not realize when the dues are payable. However, we do need to keep our membership strong and lively.

We plan a second general membership meeting for this fall that will be a part of a social-camping-hiking event.

We will appoint a planning committee this summer to begin assessing our accomplishments during the past 25 years, and to consider the directions we need to take in the future.

Lyman Stucker will continue to organize the special hikes every other month or so, and will send on level walker reports to the Park Superintendent and select some for the newsletter.

If you send in your 1980 dues (\$8 to Emmie Woodward, Treasurer, 9017 Old Dominion Dr., McLean, VA 22102) you will be sure to continue receiving the Along the Towpath newsletter (quarterly) and thereby be informed of our news and activities.

Barbara Yeaman, your President
for 1980-1981

LEVEL WALKERS' SECTION: HIKE, NOTES, REPORTS

A level walkers' hike will be held on Saturday, September 27, 1980, from Tidelock(Mile 0) to Carderock(Mile 10.4). Interested hikers should meet at 9:00 AM at Carderock, where some of the drivers will transport hikers to Tidelock. The hike will begin at approximately 9:30 AM, and will pass the Foundry Visitor Center and the Clara Barton House en route to Carderock, with lunch stop at Glen Echo.

For more information, call Joan(Lone Ranger) Paull (301-384-8584) or Al Stanley (301-439-4769) in the Washington metro area.

The Level Walker list will be updated next Fall. Anyone needing a current list, please advise Lyman Stucker.

We are delighted that Cathy Douglas will be the Level Walker on Section 9 which the Justice had for many years. We also welcome as new Level Walkers: Ann Fisher, Mary Hoffman, Tom Conlon, Faye Purdham, and Mel Collins.

We have heard from Level Walker Susan "Butch" Henley who is on the Cross Country Walk. She writes:

"Walking on the Calif asphalt is as tough as the Towpath on the feet. We have been doing 16 mile days and have come 175 miles across center of Calif. We have good support from the AHS and the local Calif people. We start into the foot hills of Serrias in a couple of days so mileage will be shortened I hope. We've been lost a few times. A lot of people who hiked the first few days plan to join us on the C&O Canal so be ready for lots of hikers in Spring '81. See you then."

/s/ Butch(Folsom,CA 4/25)

Level 6 - Cropley to Great Falls - Helen Johnston

The towpath is in generally good condition. The erosion at the canal's edge continues and needs constant checking or it could easily become a serious problem in several places. Persistent close mowing and cutting back of vegetation helps to create erosion and also destroys some of the natural beauty of the area.

The tavern, its grounds and its restrooms are very well maintained. During the day, restroom users strew toilet paper and paper towels but the rest rooms are always in good shape at the beginning of the day.

This section of the towpath, especially in the immediate area of the tavern, continues to have extremely heavy use. On a good weekend, it is estimated that at least 10,000 people visit the area during the day.

No other part of the Park is richer in plant and animal life.

I am currently continuing my effort to compile a comprehensive listing of wild flowers and ferns illustrated with black and white photographs. With luck, this may be nearing completion by the end of this year.

Level 7 - Great Falls to Swains Lock - John Anderson

Towpath Condition. Generally good for this time of year although somewhat soft due to spring thaw and runoff.

Canal. Plenty of water in canal with a few canoeists using it. Some debris floating along top.

Some wildlife in abundance - mostly birds - but spring was definitely moving forward.

This section is in relatively good shape and ready for spring and summer season of use by many people. This must be one of the heaviest-used sections outside of Georgetown.

Level 19 - Point of Rocks to Catoctin Aqueduct - Marie Grenan

The towpath surprisingly was quite dry and relatively smooth. Park Service appears to be filling in the eroded spots with blue stone and dirt. Near the station, especially where recent construction of the sewer lines was done, the area between station and canal has been cleared, seeded and young trees have been planted.

Well, the old Pivot Bridge is having a 'face lift'. Can't say that the new appearance is going to be like the Pivot Bridge we all came to know. The bridge is barricaded, and parking area near bridge is off limits. The piers are being shorn up with metal plates. To this observer, it seems like it will be too modernistic a structure when completed. Time will tell! Bridge will be closed to traffic for some time.

Saw many spring flowers including trillium, star of Bethlehem, meadow rue, corydalis, some squirrel corn. Spotted whole patch of bamboo near lockhouse 28. Bird spotted were cardinal, carolina wren, chickadee, titmouse, red bellied woodpecker, robins, and a WILD TURKEY - (N.B.: Is this the one who is making the headline in the newspaper this week? Could be)

Levels 24 and 25 - Dam 3 to Dargan - Jack and Dot Geary

The two levels that have everything: a brick lockhouse, a dam, a lost ramp, an HBO, a dry dock, a limestone kiln, a manganese quarry, a cave and a haunted house.

All the spring wild flowers were vying for attention, with the sweet, heady smell of Dutchman's Butcher winning by a nose. A congregation of redwing black birds were having a late Sunday afternoon choir practice, waking an owl who gave out with one long hoot. They never disturbed the long black snake sunning himself in the crotch of a sycamore.

So, all was well with levels 24 and 25, except at about mile 65.5 opposite the cave on the river side a geological marker had been partially unearthed.

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

Towpath in excellent condition no damage noted or vandalism on this section.

Lock 50 continues to lean in a precarious position(walls) masonry coming apart. Should be stabilized as soon as possible.

Mule barn is starting to peel. Suggest a new coating be put on this summer by one of the maintenance crews, if possible.

(We discovered that McGraw is an excellent photographer. He sent good detail 5x7 pictures of Lock 50 and the Mule barn. - Editor)

Level 43 - McCoys Ferry to Fort Frederick - Karen Gray

The North Mountain Hiker-Biker and the McCoy's Ferry campground were in good condition. In fact, during the entire walk I was surprised at the almost total absence of any kind of litter. Perhaps the Park Service had just done a cleaning along that stretch. I even found very little natural debris on the tow path despite strong winds the weekend before.

This time I got only one brief glimpse of a fleeting deer although in the past I have had good views of them along the tow path--once getting quite close before they realized I was there and disappeared into the trees.

The walk was especially pleasant because the only sounds were natural and I met no one from the time I left Fort Frederick until my return there. Even the campground at McCoys Ferry was unused. All in all it was a lovely walk and I have nothing specific to convey to the Park Service except thanks for keeping everything so clean.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR C & O CANAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERS - SUMMER 1980

Your editor requests that you fill in and return this questionnaire. Your responses, he hopes, will suggest how Along the Towpath could be made more useful to you, the members. Responses will be summarized and published in the next issue. If enough members respond, perhaps we will learn something revealing about our aggregate selves. Please fold questionnaire ~~twice~~ and staple in the middle, or use your own envelope. Thanks.

1. How long have you been a member of the Association?
 - a) One year b) Two years c) 3-5 years d) More than 5 years
2. How did you first learn of the Association?
 - a) From a member b) From a hike ad c) From the NPS d) Other _____
3. How old are you?
 - a) Less than 25 b) 25 to 44 c) 45 to 64 d) Over 64
4. What is your sex? a) female b) male
5. How far from the canal do you live?
 - a) Less than 5 miles b) 5-25 miles c) 26-50 miles d) More than 50 miles
6. How often do you visit the canal park?
 - a) Once a week or more often b) More than once a month but less than once a week
 - c) More than 3 times a year but less than once a month d) Three times a year or less
7. Do you bring children with you when you visit the park?
 - a) Never b) Occasionally c) Usually d) Always
8. What percentage of your time spent in the park is on bicycle?
 - a) 0 b) More than 0 but less than 25 c) 26-50 d) 51-75 e) 76-100
9. Are you a level walker now? a) no b) yes
10. Have you been a level walker in the past? a) no b) yes
11. How far do you travel, on the average, to the canal for a visit?
 - a) Less than 5 miles b) 5-25 miles c) 26-50 miles d) More than 50 miles
12. To what extent is your membership in the Association based on an interest in historical preservation?
 - a) Not at all b) A minor concern c) A major concern d) Almost entirely
13. To what extent is your membership in the Association based on an interest in environmental conservation?
 - a) Not at all b) A minor concern c) A major concern d) Almost entirely
14. To what extent is your membership in the Association based on an interest in physical activity?
 - a) Not at all b) A minor concern c) A major concern d) Almost entirely
15. To what extent is your membership in the Association based on an interest in meeting people?
 - a) Not at all b) A minor concern c) A major concern d) Almost entirely

16. How do you feel about \$8 dues?
 - a) Too little b) About right c) Too much
17. Do you feel you understand what your dues are used for?
 - a) Yes b) Have some idea c) Not very well d) No
18. How many hikes should the Association sponsor each year?
 - a) One b) Two or three c) 4 to 6 d) More than 6
19. How many educational programs should the Association sponsor each year?
 - a) None b) One c) Two or three d) More than 3
20. How many general membership meetings should the Association hold each year?
 - a) One b) Two c) Three d) More than 3
21. Are you familiar with the functions of the Association's Board?
 - a) No b) Have some familiarity c) Have good idea d) Am familiar
22. On which days of the week do your canal park visits usually fall?
 - a) No particular days b) Sat or Sun c) Mon through Fri
23. How many Association events a year would you be willing to help arrange?
 - a) None b) One c) Two d) More than 2
24. How many Association events a year would you participate in?
 - a) None b) One c) Two d) More than 2
25. In which season do you most frequently visit the canal park?
 - a) Fall b) Winter c) Spring d) Summer e) No particular season
26. Do you enjoy receiving Along the Towpath?
 - a) No b) Occasionally c) Usually d) Yes
27. Do you enjoy the level walker reports in the newsletter?
 - a) Yes, my favorite part b) Yes, but not my favorite part
 - c) Occasionally d) Rarely e) Never
28. Would you like to see more excerpts from relevant newsletters of other organizations in Along the Towpath?
 - a) Yes b) No
29. How many times a year would you like to see the newsletter published?
 - a) Don't want newsletter b) Whenever there is a noteworthy event
 - c) Four times or fewer d) Five times or more
30. Along the Towpath, currently sent third class at non-profit organization rates, costs 3.1¢ per copy to mail, and takes up to 3 weeks to be delivered. Would you be willing to pay 15-30¢ per issue for first class mailing?
 - a) No b) Yes
31. How do you compare the Association's annual reunion hike with other towpath events you participate in during the year?
 - a) Much worse than others b) Not as good as others c) About the same
 - d) Better than others e) Much better than others

PLEASE NOTE QUESTIONNAIRE CONCLUDES ON NEXT PAGE

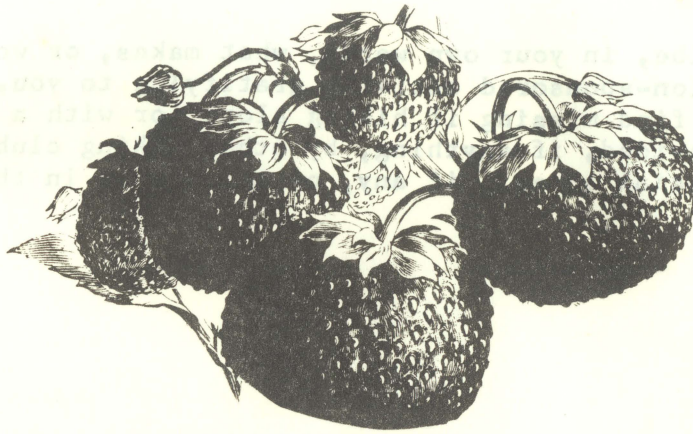
32. Finally, describe, in your own words, what makes, or would make, a C & O Canal Association-sponsored activity gratifying to you. Note especially what you would find missing if hiking alone (or with a few friends), and what is not provided, if anything, by other hiking clubs. In other words, what is the special appeal, if any, of membership in the Association?

For comments or more room, use other side.

Detach pages 7/8 and 9/10. Place pages 7/8 next to page 10 and fold at line above with page 9 outside.

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Forget
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TO: Robert Greenspun, Editor
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- o Level Walkers' Reports
- o President's Column
- o Plea for new organizers
- o Questionnaire for members