

ALONG THE TOWPATH

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE

CHESAPEAKE & OHIO CANAL ASSOCIATION

An independent, non-profit, all-volunteer citizens association established in 1954 supporting the conservation of the natural and historical environment of the C&O Canal and the Potomac River Basin.

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Number 4

Building Blocks of the Canal: The Log Wall

By Stephanie Spencer

There are many different elements of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park (C&O Canal NHP) that are not as visible to the average towpath user as are lift locks, aqueducts, and lockhouses. But they still play a vital role in maintaining both the towpath and the park's story.

These elements include structures like culverts, waste weirs, and the historic Log Wall near Mile 11 of the C&O Canal. In November 2022, the C&O Canal NHP awarded a project contract – funded through the Great American Outdoors Act – to address the Log Wall's critical needs.

What is the *Log Wall*?

The Log Wall is a dry-laid stone wall located in the lower (eastern) portion of the park. This approximately 1,015-foot-long wall supports the towpath and the canal prism, and also protects them both from the waters of the Potomac River.

The Log Wall was originally constructed between 1828 and 1831 and varies in heights of up to 35 feet. This section of the canal is significantly higher in elevation than the Potomac River, which in this area curves around two islands. The building of this large stone wall gave the contractors working on the canal a way to utilize and dispose of the stone removed from the canal prism.

Continued on Page 12



The building of the Log Wall upstream riprap buttress – Photo by C&O Canal NHP Professional Services Division

C&O Canal Association Membership Renewals

C&O Canal Association memberships renew at the first of the calendar year. Maintaining a current membership is required to participate in the Association board, vote in board elections, participate in the Level Walker program and to receive the *Along the Towpath* newsletter.

If your membership lapses at the end of the year, you will receive the upcoming March, 2025 issue of *Along the Towpath* as a courtesy, but you will not receive additional issues.

Please use the enclosed renewal form to process your membership renewal for 2025 if you haven't already. Alternatively, you can renew on-line or download a form by visiting candocanal.org/membership/ or scanning the QR code to the right. Click on the *Renew Your Membership for 2025* button to renew on-line. If you are unsure of your membership status, check the "Membership Expires" date just above your name on the mailing address for this issue of *Along the Towpath*. If it says "Membership Expires Dec-2024" then your membership renewal is due. Please contact the Membership Chair via email at membership@candocanal.org if you have any questions. Thank you so much for your continued support of our organization!



If Your Membership Expired in 2022 or 2023 –

If your membership expired in the past two years, you are no longer a member of the Association and you have stopped receiving *Along the Towpath*. You can verify this on the mailing address for this issue by checking for "Membership Expired Dec-2022" or "Membership Expired Dec-2023". We are providing this issue as a courtesy to you. If you missed receiving *Along the Towpath*, please consider renewing by using the above renewal information.

The Association Welcomes New Members

Laxman Dhulipala and Siri Sarva

Thomas and Susan Hougen

Mark Heaney

Anne E. Mickey

Thank you for joining the Association and for your support of our organization!

Qualified Charitable Distributions

Some of our members choose to donate to the Association using Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD) from their Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA).

If you are considering a QCD, please be assured that the Association will provide a timely acknowledgement of your donation. We are aware that QCD donors need such documentation when preparing their tax returns. The Association is grateful for every donation and acknowledges each contribution. At year end, we prioritize QCD acknowledgements.

What is a QCD? You must be age 70½ or older to qualify. The QCD is a distribution directly from your IRA to a qualified charity such as the Association. The QCD doesn't count towards your taxable income but does count towards any Required Minimum Distribution. Also, the QCD cannot provide any personal benefit to the donor such as membership dues. If you are considering a QCD, make sure to consult your tax advisor. Please don't rely upon the Association for tax advice.

Donors to Association Funds

August 1 to October 31, 2024

C&O Canal Association donation policy. The Association is grateful for the generous support provided by donors over the years. If a donor specifies one of the special purpose funds listed below, we add the donation to that fund. With the exception of the General Fund, we will use the money in accordance with the goals of the fund and not for administrative costs.

General Fund. If a donor doesn't specify a fund, we add that donation to the general fund, which can be used for any purpose, including the Association's administrative costs.

Help the Association by paying online. The Association website makes it easy to pay on-line using your credit card. Processing on-line payments is more secure and easier for our volunteers. You can renew your membership, purchase event meals or bus tickets, or make donations. We use PayPal to process our payments, but you don't need a PayPal membership. You can use your credit or debit card. *Note – PayPal will encourage you to sign up. That is unnecessary. You can deselect the button "Save info and create your PayPal account."*

Association Funds

A – Nancy C. Long Aqueduct Fund

– Supports restoration and preservation of the 11 aqueducts on the C&O Canal. The fund was established with a generous donation made by C&O Canal advocate Nancy Long.

C – The Cumberland Repair and Maintenance Fund

– Donations specifically identified for repair and maintenance of the historic canal boat replica in Cumberland.

G – General Fund

– General funds that are used for any purpose.

R – Ken Rollins C&O Canal Fund

– Supports current projects and programs in and for the C&O Canal National Historical Park.

Donating Funds

Scan the QR code with a mobile device or visit the below link below for further information about Association funds or to contribute now.



www.candocanal.org/contributions/

Donations

Individual Donations

Marney Bruce – **G**

Rita Knox – **C**

Michael Marmer – **A**

Maureen L. McElroy – **G**

Douglas Mitchell – **R**

Emil Moskovich – **R**

Dennis Sloppy – **G**

Rachel Weisz – **G**

Denise Yocum – **G**

In Honor of John Burwell

Mike Gerecht – **G**

In Honor of Larry Evans

Susan Amchan – **G**

Elizabeth Dane – **G**

In Honor of Al Gross

Mike Gerecht – **G**

In memory of Christine Cerniglia

Funds use to be designated at a later date based on inputs from her family

Keith Allen

Kathleen Carroll

Lana Crouse

Ashley Marie Davidson

Marguerite Dennis

June Gardner

Burton Hall

Todd Hughes

Steve Johnson

John Klima

Mary Anne Krenk

Kathleen Miles

Dianne Strickler

Nancy Werner

Notice of 2025 C&O Canal Association Annual Meeting

By Steven Dean

Announcement of Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the membership of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Association will be held on Saturday, March 22, 2025 in Beallsville, Md. Details of the meeting location and arrangements are in the sidebar at the end of this article. The meeting will be for the purpose of electing officers for

2025, electing a nominating committee for 2026, receiving reports of officers and committees, and any other business that may properly come before it. There are no proposals to amend the bylaws. All members of the Association in good standing are invited to attend. This notice constitutes the call for the meeting, pursuant to articles II.2, III.1, and IX of the bylaws.

2025 C&O Canal Association Annual Meeting

The annual meeting returns to the Upper Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Department (UMCVFD) in Beallsville, Md. on March 22, 2025. This venue is central to most annual meeting attendees and is a hospitable location with a large meeting room. Annual meeting events start at 11:30 a.m. and the meeting starts at 1:00 p.m., followed by a happy hour and dinner.

11:30 a.m. – Meet the Candidates. This is an informal time to meet the candidates and mingle with other Association members. Many members consider it a great time to reconnect, talk about projects, swap canal stories, see old timers, meet new people and ask questions.

A lunch is available for \$10 and will be served at noon. The lunch must be reserved in advance – visit the registration website at the below link or view the enclosed registration form for details. The lunch menu is a choice of pulled pork or tuna sandwiches with chips and drinks.

1:00 p.m. – Annual Meeting. The meeting will be called to order to conduct Association business, including proposed bylaws amendments, committee reports and the 2025 election.

3:30 p.m. – Happy Hour. Beer, wine and non-alcoholic drinks and light snacks will be available for persons who purchased dinner.

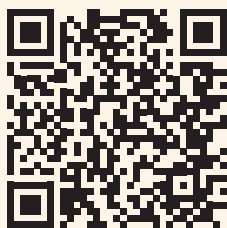
4:30 p.m. – Dinner. Dinner will be available for \$30 with a choice of vegetarian and non-vegetarian options. The dinner must be reserved in advance – visit the registration website at the below link or use the enclosed registration form.

The vegetarian dinner option is baked ziti and the non-vegetarian option is chicken cacciatore. Side dishes include tossed salad, scalloped potatoes, parsley potatoes and mixed vegetables. Dessert is a variety of baked goods. Drinks options are iced tea and coffee.

Meal reservations must be received by Saturday, March 8, 2025. Please allow extra time for mail delivery.

Meal Registration

Attendees can register with the form enclosed in this newsletter or register on-line at www.candocanal.org/ annual meeting. Open the camera app on your phone or pad. Hold your device so that the QR code appears in view. Tap the notification over the QR code to open the Annual Meeting link.



Directions

*The UMCVFD is located at 19801 Beallsville Road. Open the camera app on your phone or pad. Hold your device so the QR code to the right appears in view. Tap the notification over the QR code to open Google Maps. Within the app select **Directions** to enable navigation guidance.*



Nominations for Officers and Directors

Officers, except directors, are elected at each annual meeting to serve a term of one year. In addition, three directors are elected at each annual meeting to serve a term of three years. The nominating committee, chosen at the preceding annual meeting, will present a slate of candidates. Additional nominations may be made from the floor at the annual meeting. Members attending the 2024 annual meeting elected Barbara Sheridan (Chair), Trent Carbaugh, Steven Dean, Jim Heins, Tony Laing and Jonnie Lefebure to form the 2025 nominating committee. The committee has nominated the following candidates for election in 2025.

Arthur Tsien – President

As a lifelong outdoors and parks enthusiast, I learned about the C&O Canal soon after moving to the Washington, D.C. area in 1980. Over the years, I have walked and biked the towpath and explored many of the canal's wonderful historic and natural features. The canal is my favorite local outdoor spot. I try to visit somewhere on the canal at least once every several weeks. By my count, I had 31 visits in 2023.

I have been an Association member for over 20 years. I currently serve as First Vice President, Chair of the Bylaws Committee and Chair of the Audit Committee. I am a level walker with three assigned levels. I have also participated in many Association walks and work sessions. I am a retired lawyer and live in Chevy Chase, Maryland with my spouse, Judy McGuire.

It is an honor to be nominated to serve as the Association's President. If elected, I will try to help the Association advance its mission and improve its operations. Thank you for reading.

Barbara Sheridan – Vice President

I have been a member of the C&O Canal Association for over 25 years, and have served previously on the board as a director, as first vice president, and as president. I have chaired two thru-hikes (2004 and 2009) and was the membership chair for 15 years. I am also currently serving on the programs committee. I was born in Washington, D. C. and have lived in the area all my life. My first awareness of the canal was an aerial view of it from a streetcar while on the way to Glen Echo Amusement Park as a child. The streetcars are long gone, as is the amusement park, but the canal lives on for all to enjoy! If elected as vice president, I will work with the Association to help preserve and protect this valuable resource for future generations.

Jane Hanna – Secretary

I have served as an Association director for the past four years and I worked on the 2021 World Canals Conference. I am retired from the National Park Service, where I worked at

the Harpers Ferry Center writing and designing interpretive media. I currently serve as a level walker on Level 14.

Paul Lubell – Treasurer

Thank you for considering me for reelection as treasurer of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Association. Since the 1990s, I have been treasurer at a series of non-profit organizations. This includes the International Society of Parametric Analysts (ISPA) 1996-2000, Thrivent Baltimore County Chapter (2003-2007), Columbia Volksmarch Club (2013-present), and St Paul Lutheran Church-Catonsville (2020-present). Their annual budgets ranged from the low thousands to amounts in excess of \$1,000,000. Additionally, as chairman of the finance board at St. Paul (2004-2007), I was responsible for setting up the church's account charging structure.

I have an MBA in finance (1965) and have a very strong interest in investments. I have a small tax practice so am able to prepare our 990-EZ forms that are required by the Internal Revenue Service. My son has been kind enough to give me a 2019 version of Quickbooks so reports will be able to be prepared using the same software that the Association has been using many years. This increases the comparability of prior year to current year data. Many of you know me by now. Please continue to ask questions whenever something concerning our finances is not clear. I promise you a prompt and candid response.

Kerry Gruber – Director

I've been an Association member since 2010 and first joined the board of directors in 2015. I have also participated in hikes along the canal and several World Canals conferences. I was born in Baltimore and raised in North Chevy Chase, Maryland and Washington, D.C. My grandparents lived in the Burleith neighborhood of Washington, D.C. and painted scenes of the canal and Georgetown back in the 1930s. I retired from the federal government in 2012 as an education statistician. The beauty and history of the canal is something I enjoy sharing with others. It would be an honor to serve the Board as a director.

Scott Parker – Director

I have been a practicing professional archaeologist since 1987. I received my Bachelors degree in Anthropology from the University of Arizona in 1982 and my Master's Degree in Anthropology from the University of Virginia in 1989. Throughout my career I have been engaged in some form of mostly hands on education from college level archaeological field schools to Archaeo Camps for middle and high school students to working with volunteers and interns of all ages and to teaching seminars and workshops.

I started my archaeology career working for the National Trust for Historic Preservation at James Madison's Montpelier

in Orange County, Virginia. I am currently President and Director of Research at Little Antietam Creek, Inc. (LACI) in Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, which is a not-for-profit organization whose mission it is to inspire and educate people of all ages in the lives of past people and the process of researching and preserving those lives – accomplished through hands on learning experiences. I am a co-founder of LACI, which is headquartered at the Stoner Farm – a property that has been in my family since 1744.

David Romanowski – Director

I've been a C&O Canal Association member for decades and a canal visitor since the 1980s. I live in Bethesda and frequently walk the towpath and nearby trails. I've biked the entire canal by myself and with an organized tour.

I retired from a long career as a writer-editor at the National Air and Space Museum, mainly working on exhibits.

My work there also enabled me to become involved in several National Park Service projects, including writing visitor center and wayside exhibits for Assateague Island National Seashore and for the USS *Arizona* Memorial and other sites in Pearl Harbor.

After retiring, I volunteered at the Natural History Museum and National Building Museum visitor centers and as a C&O Canal bike patroller. Since the pandemic, I've been volunteering at Great Falls Tavern, greeting and assisting park visitors on Wednesday afternoons. I've also helped Jim Heins and his crew paint and assemble picnic tables and paint the fence at Riley's Lock.

I've recently been considering ways to become more involved in the Association. Being asked to become a director candidate came as a surprise, but a timely one. If selected I would be honored to serve.

Board Meeting Highlights

By Jane Hanna

October 6, 2024

C&O Canal National Historical Park staff hosted the Association board at their Williamsport headquarters and visitor complex. Christiana Hanson and Shaun Lehmann updated the board on several park projects the Association is involved in via funding and other efforts.

The park showed meeting attendees wayside exhibit panels on the canal's African American history soon to be installed at Ferry Hill, Md. The Association helped fund this project, and the Association logo is included at the top of each panel.

Christiana and Shaun presented plans for the Headquarters Campus:

- Improved wayfinding around the campus.
- Three waysides on C&O Canal NHP, Williamsport as a canal town, and the historic Miller Lumber Building.
- The development of the Trolley Barn into a museum and educational center.

Meeting attendees toured the Trolley Barn, built in 1896 to power a local trolley line. The new museum will have classrooms and lunch space for school groups, "Canal 101" exhibits, store operations, and murals depicting Cumberland, Williamsport, Paw Paw, and Georgetown. The park hopes to begin operations here in spring of 2025.

Shaun updated the board on projects elsewhere in the park, including rebuilding locks and walls, resurfacing of the towpath, development of an in-house preservation crew, and other maintenance needs.

The repairs to the replica canal boat in Cumberland are just about done, except for protective sealing. The board was very impressed by the speed and quality of the repairs. *See the photos on the next page.*

Join the Association for the annual meeting scheduled for March 22, 2025, at the Volunteer Fire Department in Beallsville, Md. *See details on Page 4.*

The next board meeting is December 1, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. at the Glen Echo Town Hall.



Association board members after visiting the Trolley Barn – Photo by Jane Hanna

The Cumberland Repairs

The C&O Canal Association recently funded repairs to *The Cumberland* boat located at Canal Place in Cumberland. An extensive list of repairs was accomplished and are summarized below. The work was performed by Hanada Contracting of Annapolis, Md. Plan to visit the boat on your next trip to Cumberland.

- Power washed, scraped, sanded, primed, and repainted the interior and exterior of the boat.
- Replaced the wooden *The Cumberland* lettering and replaced the surrounding rotted out wooden backing.
- Replaced the entire section of rotted floor near the stern and the surrounding missing railing components.
- Replaced three windows and trim, matching the newly repaired glass window.
- Replaced the exposed flooring system located in the front and back of the boat.
- Repaired and repainted the wooden beam located near the stern.
- Completely replaced one cabin door.
- Replaced 100 linear feet of rotted and damaged wood located throughout the boat.
- Furnished and installed renovation recognition plaque in the back cabin.

**RENOVATION OF THE C&O CANAL BOAT
REPLICA "THE CUMBERLAND"
TO HELP PRESERVE A VITAL PIECE
OF THE CANAL'S HERITAGE**

**FUNDING PROVIDED BY THE
CHESAPEAKE AND OHIO CANAL
ASSOCIATION, INC.**

**RENOVATION WORK PERFORMED BY
HANADA CONTRACTING**

SEPTEMBER 2024

Wording of the recognition plaque located in the boat cabin.



Lettering and stern repairs.



Tiller repairs before and after.



Window repairs before and after.



Along the Towpath, December 2024



Across the Berm – Christine Cerniglia

By Steven Dean

Christine Cerniglia died on October 1, 2024, after a lengthy illness. She is survived by her husband Wayne and three adult children.

Chris was a life-long supporter of the C&O Canal. In her own words: “Having grown up on the C&O Canal next to the lock house at Lock 8, I have always had a love for the canal, the river and all things involving them. As a life-long resident of the Washington area, I have had the opportunity to spend many enjoyable hours on the canal with my husband, our children, my Girl Scout troops and our friends. My husband Wayne and I have had many opportunities to hike the canal and learn about the towns and communities that adjoin it. This has increased our affection and appreciation for the whole canal from Cumberland to Georgetown.”

Chris recalled watching the original hikers led by Justice Douglas as they passed by her home near Lock 8 in 1954. Her family was very concerned about the possibility of the canal becoming a roadway.

After joining the Association, Chris and Wayne quickly became very active members and participated in numerous

thru-hikes and other Association events through the years. For over 20 years, starting in 1997, she assisted Wayne with the greatly appreciated task of serving as bartenders at Association events.

Chris served on the Association board as a director for several years, as first vice president from 2000 to 2002, and as president from 2003 to 2004. She served as a member of the “Save the Monocacy Aqueduct” committee, which became the special projects committee. This committee played a key role in the eventual stabilization of the longest aqueduct on the C&O Canal. She also supported the Association by serving several times on the nomination committee and as the program committee chair for several years. Chris, with Wayne, volunteered as level walkers on Level 8 (Locks 21 to 22).

Chris will be missed by all who knew her. Charlotte Loveless perhaps summed it up best: “I am saddened about losing Chris. Her stories of growing up near the towpath were rich with history. She was loved and is remembered for her kindness, caring and love for the Association.”



Chris Cerniglia (center) on the towpath for the 2014 Heritage Hike – Photos by Steven Dean



Chris (right) with Bill Holdsworth and Barbara Sheridan at Bill's Place for a President's Lunch

What is an *Across the Berm* article?

The “across the berm” saying refers to leaving the canal for the last time. The Association features these articles in *Along the Towpath* after the death of a person who was known for their involvement with the Association, the National Park Service or for other involvement with the canal or the region. The *Across the Berm* articles are not traditional obituaries – they are documentation and recognition of the person's accomplishments and contributions to the C&O Canal. They are a key part of the history of the Association and the canal, and we feel they are an important part of the information we present in *Along the Towpath*.

Across the Berm – Robert J. Kapsch

By Tim Snyder

With the unfortunate passing of Karen Gray early last year, I wrote an *Across the Berm* remembrance that recalled her contributions toward seeing my book, *Trembling in the Balance: The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal during the Civil War*, to publication. An even earlier mentor was Robert J. Kapsch. His book, *The Potomac Canal: George Washington and the Waterway West*, was published by West Virginia University (WVU) Press in 2007. In seeking a publisher for my manuscript, I submitted it to WVU Press and the then-editor expressed an interest in it. As academic presses do, the editor sent the draft out for review by academics and professionals with expertise in the field. Before I heard back from the Press, Bob Kapsch gave a talk about his book in Hagerstown. I attended and spoke to him afterwards. He freely admitted that he was one of the “anonymous” reviewers of my manuscript and had recommended its publication with some changes, mostly to the introductory chapter. In contrast to that approach, a second reviewer recommended a wholesale rewrite along thematic lines, such as railroad versus canal, rather than the chronological format in which I had written it.

After some time had passed, I learned that WVU Press had changed editors and the new editor-in-chief was no longer interested in the manuscript. Regardless, before submitting it elsewhere, I revised it along the lines that Bob had recommended, which essentially became the format in which the book was published in 2011.

In 2013, WVU Press also published Bob Kapsch’s *Over the Alleghenies: Early Canals and Railroads of Pennsylvania*, which was an important book for students of the C&O Canal, because Pennsylvania’s Main Line of Public Works preceded work on the C&O Canal by a decade. As such, the Pennsylvania project was an economic competitor that threatened to divert Maryland’s coal trade to the Ohio River or the port of Philadelphia. This helps explain why Maryland invested so much money and issued so many bonds to see the C&O Canal to completion in spite of major obstacles. I wrote a review of this book in the December 2014 *Along the Towpath*.

With the C&O Canal Association’s joint sponsorship of the 2021 World Canals Conference in Hagerstown, I again got the opportunity to work with Bob. He eagerly agreed to give a canal presentation and assured me that not only could he speak authoritatively about the Potomac Canal and Pennsylvania canals, but also about the canal system of South Carolina. I asked him to speak on Pennsylvania’s canals and despite the fact that the conference theme was “Education, Recreation and Tourism,” the room where he gave his historical talk was filled to capacity.

Bob was great mentor to those seeking to research and write about the role of canals in the nation’s history. He will be greatly missed, but his academic work and the personal relationships he made are part of the legacy of an outstanding canal scholar.

Across the Berm – Bonnie Troxell

By Steven Dean

Bonnie Troxell died on October 31 after a long illness. She was a resident of Cumberland and active in many organizations in the area, including the Allegany County chapter of the C&O Canal Association.

Bonnie was an avid supporter of the C&O Canal and the Association and was especially involved in the 1970s and 1980s. She served as the president of the Association from 1975 to 1977 and served as a director for many years after. Bonnie helped organize several Douglas Reunion Hikes for the Association. She was a level walker on Levels 63 (Oldtown to Kellys Road Culvert) and 68 (Evitts Creek Aqueduct to Wiley Ford) for many years and was one of the most active

level walkers in the Cumberland area. Bonnie served as the Allegany County representative on the C&O Canal Federal Advisory Commission until July 1985.

Bonnie helped lead efforts by the Allegany County chapter of the Association in 1972 to organize and raise money for the replica canal boat that ultimately became *The Cumberland* and is now located in Cumberland.

Rita Knox and Hollie Lynch, former C&O Canal NHP rangers, both noted their appreciation of Bonnie’s passion for the C&O Canal and how it shined through in the many ways she served the park and shared the canal’s history.

Across the Berm – George Lewis

By Steven Dean

Dr. George E. Lewis, Jr. died on September 22, 2024, in Mt. Airy Md. after a long battle with cancer. Dr. Lewis was originally from Florida and was a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine. He had a long and distinguished career in the United States Army with numerous awards and medals and retired at the rank of colonel. He authored over 50 scientific publications.

Dr. Lewis was involved in the C&O Canal and Frederick County, Md. as an advocate, supporter and volunteer. He was a long-time member of the C&O Canal Association and served as director. Dr. Lewis served as an early advisor and supporter for the C&O Canal Trust. He became the chair of the C&O Canal National Historical Park Advisory Commission in 2016.

Dr. Lewis was instrumental in the restoration of the Catoctin Aqueduct, as noted in the sidebar, which he felt was a significant impediment to the use of the towpath. In 2005, when he established the Catoctin Aqueduct Restoration fund, he commented: “The Catoctin Aqueduct is the only stone structure of its type on the entirety of the C&O Canal that remains collapsed. Along with the more recent problem at Big Slackwater, this chronic breach denies any semblance of towpath integrity and continuity.” (*Note that the Big Slackwater problem was later resolved.*) In 2011 he was recognized by C&O Canal NHP Superintendent Kevin Brandt with

the Superintendent’s Award for Excellence in Citizen Stewardship for his advocacy and efforts to support successful restoration of the Catoctin Aqueduct.

C&O Canal Association president Bill Holdsworth noted: The breadth of George Lewis’ service to the C&O Canal is amazing. In the 1990s he was involved in the rehabilitation of the Lander Lockhouse (29) that saw it opened to visitors. In the first decade of this century, his campaign to rebuild the Catoctin Aqueduct is well known and awe-inspiring. When the C&O Canal Federal Advisory Commission was revived in 2016, George was a logical candidate for chairman. I attended several meetings and witnessed his determination to forge a role for the commission in the management of the canal. In 2021 he was a featured speaker at the World Canals Conference in Hagerstown. It is an enviable legacy.

Carol Galaty recalls: I think often of George on our through-hike taking care of everyone’s feet, plastering blisters and giving muscle relaxing massages to sore feet and ankles. At the end of the day if he saw anyone hobbling, he would say: “Come over here and let me take a look at your hoofs!” I was astonished by all that he did professionally, especially his long and impressive military service. I had no idea that our sweet, strong, helpful, hoof doctor was such a powerhouse in his professional life.



Dr. George Lewis at the groundbreaking for the Catoctin Aqueduct project – Photos by Steven Dean



George Lewis (center) at the 2011 Douglas Hike with Karen Gray (left) and Carl Linden (right)

George Lewis and the Catoctin Aqueduct



C&O Canal users who have traveled the towpath in Frederick County are undoubtedly familiar with the Catoctin Aqueduct, located in Lander, Md. at Mile 51.5. This beautiful structure features three arches; the two outer arches are circular and the center is a 40-foot span elliptical arch. The original aqueduct was completed in 1834 and over time the center arch started to sag. In 1973 the center and upstream arches completely collapsed. The National Park Service installed a Bailey steel frame bridge across the creek to maintain towpath continuity (shown above). While functional, the Bailey bridge lacked the charm and authentic canal appearance of the original aqueduct. Dr. George Lewis led efforts to advocate and raise funds to support study and design of a shovel ready approach to restore the aqueduct. He established the Catoctin Aqueduct Restoration (CAR) fund and in 2006 the CAR entered a formal agreement with the C&O Canal NHP. The project was funded in 2009 under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Corman Construction rebuilt the aqueduct as a reinforced structure integrating recovered original stones. In October 2011 the aqueduct reopened.

Anyone who crosses the Catoctin Aqueduct today owes thanks to Dr. George Lewis. It is a magnificent tribute to his dedication and spirit of service.





Building Blocks of the Canal: The Log Wall (Continued)

Lock 15 at the upstream end of Widewater (Mile 13) – Photo by Stephanie Spencer

Log Wall – Continued from Page 1

Although the actual origin of the name “Log Wall” is a bit of a mystery, some sources speculate that it originates from higher parts of the wall having rows of plank piling on the inside, perhaps put in place as part of repairs conducted following the 1889 flood.

What is the Great American Outdoors Act?

Implemented on August 4, 2020, the National Park Service’s Great American Outdoors Act – Legacy Restoration Fund Program (GAOA LRF) was established to address deferred maintenance and repair (DM&R) requirements. DM&R refers to maintenance and repairs delayed due to limited resources or not performed when scheduled.

As of September 30, 2023, the Department of the Interior’s DM&R total was \$32.4 billion. Prior to the establishment of GAOA, many large projects were unable to be funded. Thanks to GAOA, 326 projects are planned, ongoing, or have been completed within fiscal years 2021 through 2024 across every state and multiple territories.

The National Park Service receives 70% of the GAOA LRF funding, which provides \$1.9 billion annually across five years – from fiscal years 2021 to 2025. While this will not address all the DM&R backlog, it will slow the growth of the needs over time, while also making GAOA the single largest investment in public lands in United States history.



A 2020 upstream view of Log Wall before project work began – Photo by C&O Canal Professional Services Division



A March 2024 upstream view of Log Wall after repairs – Photo by C&O Canal Professional Services Division

Why is the Construction Project Needed?

Around 2015 and 2016, sinkholes began to form in the canal above Log Wall. The area was temporarily stabilized by dewatering this stretch of the canal and by using sandbags to prevent water from further infiltrating into the sinkholes and stone wall. The dewatering efforts impacted a 4-mile stretch of the canal from Lock 14 at Mile 9.47 upstream to Lock 15 at Mile 13.45. This stretch of the canal includes the Widewater area at Mile 13, which is a relic channel of the Potomac River and ranges anywhere from 50 to 80 feet wide.

The portion of the canal within this stretch was altered in the 1960s by the installation of the Potomac Interceptor Combined Sewer (PI), which is operated and maintained by D.C. Water. It is an 84-inch diameter pipe that carries about 60 million gallons of combined sewage daily from the Dulles Airport area to the wastewater treatment plant in Washington, D.C. Since it is a combined sewer system, it carries fluctuating levels that are impacted by stormwater systems. Subsequent canal liner systems were also installed by D.C. Water to retain water in the canal and limit leakage out of it.

The existing canal liner system required restoration to facilitate rewatering of four miles of canal, prevent further growth of the sinkholes, and minimize infiltration of water into the dry-laid stone masonry retaining wall.

Repairs were also needed to restore connectivity of the canal due to the amount of accumulated sediment blocking



Top: A pedestrian bypass detour around the project site.

Middle: Tree removal along Log Wall.

Bottom: Repairs to the stone masonry.

All photos by C&O Canal Professional Services Division

the waterway. This sediment put pressure on the wall and required removal. There was such a large amount of sediment at the upstream end of the canal within the project area that the adjacent tributaries were prone to overtopping the canal during rainfall events. This resulted in erosion of the river side of the towpath during overtopping events. If left unaddressed, such impacts could breach the towpath, similar to a breach at the Angler's area of the towpath at Mile 12.2 over a decade ago.

What Does the Project Include?

The main goals for the stabilization of the Log Wall are to maintain towpath continuity, restore water flow in the canal prism, reduce risks to adjacent infrastructure – such as the PI, canal and towpath – and reduce the sediment load of a small portion of the tributaries within the park limits that empty into the canal.

As part of the stabilization project work, the masonry of the stone wall was repaired to reduce future instability. Earlier site visits indicated that there was movement of the stone masonry units comprising the wall. Repairs and stabilization efforts included providing stone infill and repairs to the face of the existing stone wall. In addition, a small section of the dry-laid stone masonry buttress supporting the upstream side of the wall was rebuilt. Once repairs to the wall were completed, a crushed stone gravel “core” was installed and armored with heavy dumped stone (riprap) to prevent erosion during flood events.

This dumped stone at the face of the wall provides a resisting pressure to stabilize lower

courses of the wall and buttress it from further movement. Dumped stone buttressing was the primary method used to reduce the effective height of the retaining wall and pressures within it. Historically, this method was used at the site and kept reaches of the wall in-place. During design development, a series of options were considered with buttressing being the most effective, in lieu other more intrusive methods such as full wall disassembly and reassembly.

To restore water flow in the canal prism, sediment within the prism was excavated. This effort also reduced the weight at the Log Wall. Accumulated sediment is denser than air. Portions of two tributaries between MacArthur Boulevard and the canal were also stabilized to minimize future erosion and sediment transport into the canal.



The stabilization of a tributary leading into the canal prism – Photo by C&O Canal Professional Services Division

To stop the growth of the sinkholes and their impacts to the wall and towpath, a specially designed gradation of materials – sands and gravels – infilled the existing sinkholes. The canal liner was also replaced with a geosynthetic system. The new 40-mil High Density Polyethylene (HDPE) liner limits leakage through the towpath and the wall.

The HDPE liner is protected between layers of sand and geotextile and is covered with a blanket of clay. Internal drains – comprised of clean gravel, perforated drainage pipe, and geotextile – are also included to intercept any groundwater or control any leakage under the liner system if there is future damage.

What are the Project Impacts?

The project work is anticipated to continue through late 2024. During this time, the towpath between Miles 11 and 11.5 is closed with an approximately 0.7-mile detour on a pedestrian bypass. The detour uses a temporary causeway across the canal and a temporary mulch trail through the woods leading to another mulch trail along the shoulder of MacArthur Boulevard and the existing Marsden Tract bridge over the canal. During construction, the Carderock Recreation Area Parking



The installation of an underdrain system within the canal prism – Photo by C&O Canal Professional Services Division



Panorama view of the construction of the upstream buttress – Photo by C&O Canal Professional Services Division

Lot B (Mile 10.75) is closed. All remaining parking lots remain open.

Following completion of the project, overall safety in this stretch of the canal will be improved. Historic structures will be preserved with a more sustainable system, reducing the impacts of future flood events. The impacted four miles of canal will also once again see water, allowing for the scenic views and recreational activities that visitors have come to enjoy!

Stephanie Spencer is a professional photographer and journalist from Pennsylvania. She works at the C&O Canal National Historical Park headquarters as a Facility Operations Specialist for the Maintenance Division.



The installation of the canal prism liner – Photo by C&O Canal Professional Services Division

3M Challenge

By Bill Holdsworth

A team of six Association cyclists competed against a railroad locomotive in the 6th Annual “3M” Challenge (Muscle vs Machine vs Mountain) September 14 in Cumberland.

Denny Sloppy, Kathy Merchant, Missy Pope, Patrick Pope, Emil Moskovich, and Melody Miles competed for the Association.

The race was a timed challenge between cyclists and the train. Riders followed a 15.3-mile stretch of the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) Trail alongside the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad uphill from Cumberland to Frostburg. Twenty

teams of riders departed from the Cumberland station every 10 minutes, starting at 8 a.m. The train departed at 11:30 a.m. with cyclists challenged to have a better climb time than the train.

Emil had the best time of 1:16:00.5 among the Association team. Sadly, his time was nine minutes slower than the 3,150-horsepower diesel locomotive, which made the climb in 1:07:02.9. Just under half of the 102 riders competing had a better time than the locomotive.



Association participants before the start – Photos by Bill Holdsworth



At the start of the 3M Challenge

Pedal, Paddle and Hike

The Mighty Sycamore

By Trent Carbaugh

You see the mighty sycamore along the towpath and growing on the banks of the Potomac – large beautiful trees with parti-color bark. They inhabit our city parks, those little pocket wildernesses between shopping centers, and possibly, if you are lucky, your backyard. Not only are trees of any sort important for the health and well-being of nature and we humans, there are also old cultural associations that have bearing, often subtle, on our perceptions of the world around us. There will be on that later, but to begin some elucidation by the fine science of botany would be a good start.

The American Sycamore

Platanus occidentalis

Also known as American plan-tree, buttonwood, buttonball, water beech, and whitewood tree, it is a large deciduous lowland tree 70 to 100 feet tall with a mostly straight trunk 3 to 8 feet in diameter. They can get as tall as 175 or so feet with a trunk 14 feet in diameter. The crown is wide and open, and the leaves have three to nine lobes and are coarse toothed between the lobes and a bright yellow green. The leaves are 4 to 7 inches long with a stem 2 to 3 inches long. Sycamores can have a lifespan of five to six centuries. They range from southern Maine to northern Florida and west to eastern Nebraska. They are in every state east of the Great Plains except Minnesota.

Sycamore bark is unique as well as hard to mistake for any other tree. At the base of the tree the bark is reddish brown and has a scaly appearance. As you look up

the tree the bark starts to flake off in puzzle-like pieces exposing the new smooth light gray bark underneath. It is quite common for sycamores to become hollow after they grow to larger sizes. The hollows provide shelter for animals and can be large enough to hold an adult human relatively comfortably. There are stories from early America of large hollow sycamores being used as temporary housing when opening up land for small farms.

The sycamore is the fastest growing tree on the eastern side of North America, and in the right conditions it can

grow 3 to 6 feet in a year. They get their greatest growth in well drained, deep, moist soils, at the edges of rivers, streams and creeks, but can tolerate drier areas. It is also the largest tree on the eastern side of North America. They are often planted as fast-growing shade trees in parks and larger yards.

The root system of sycamores tends to spread out and are somewhat shallow in nature but are very wind resistant. Washout from flooding is usually the cause of them falling over. In some cases, though, the root system of a large sycamore, or separate trees close together, can help stabilize stream banks and riverbanks during high water events. In the Potomac River those small gravel bars often seen become semi-permanent islands when small sycamores start to grow on them, stabilizing the stones and sand and allowing other plants to take root.



A truly mighty sycamore along Antietam Creek. The barn at left is three stories tall. All photos by Trent Carbaugh

Usually around May the sycamore produces flowers, both dark red male and yellow green female blossoms, the blossoms are inconspicuous. The female blossoms are pollinated by wind and then produce “buttons,” or ball-shaped fruits made up of clustered nutlets by early fall. The balls break up during the winter and release the nutlets, which have a small tuft of fluff to serve as a parachute. Scattered by wind and water the seeds germinate in the spring, starting a new generation of trees.

Sycamore trees have a symbiotic relationship with the arbuscular mycorrhizal fungus, *glomus hoi*, which attaches to the tree’s roots. (See *Trees, Fungus, and Complexity Science*, T. Carbaugh, 2023, *Along the Towpath* Vol. LV, Number 2 for more explanation of mycorrhizal networks). The fungus increases the surface area of the roots allowing for more efficient absorption of water and nutrients. The fungus also forms a protective barrier to protect the tree roots from harmful pathogenic fungi. *Glomus hoi* can also store resources such as phosphorus and nitrogen in lean times, as well as facilitate transfer of these resources to other nearby sycamores and some other trees which are also associated with arbuscular mycorrhizae. These include cedars, cypress, junipers, redwoods, maple, ash (if you can find any), dogwoods, yellow poplar, and sweetgum.

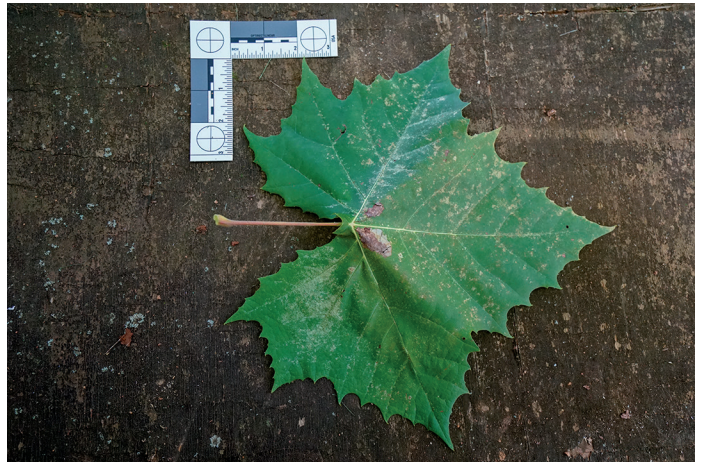
Aside from the important duty of stabilizing river and stream banks, they provide homes for animals, and shade for us as well as critters. With its interlocking fibers, the fine-grained hardwood of the sycamore has many uses as well, including fine furniture, barrels, musical instruments, paper pulp, railroad ties, and firewood. Sycamore wood is often used for food processing tools such as containers, cutting boards, and butcher blocks. The grain structure makes it easy to clean and disinfect. Historically, sawn-off pieces of hollow trunks were used to create storage containers and tubs or troughs for watering livestock. The Eastern Woodland Native American cultures manufactured dugout canoes, some up to sixty-five feet long, out of large enough trunks. Canoes this long could travel the Potomac and its larger tributaries at most times of the year, except for late summer, due to higher water levels in pre-industrial times.

The Attached Mythology

Sycamores, both American and European, are often associated with various beliefs. In our “enlightened” modern times we often forget that folks lived closer to nature than we tend to do. They had connections, associations, and beliefs attached to everything in their worldview. At best nowadays we see these beliefs as an interesting anthropological exercise, at worst we dismiss it out of hand as silly superstition. Often, though, ancient ways of thinking percolate through the haze of modern thought and our concepts of what constitutes rational



Immature windfall seed pods. These are about one half inch.



A large sycamore leaf, the photo scale is in inches.



A sycamore with a hole halfway up the trunk that provides a home for some raccoons.

belief and hit us with visceral feelings of wonder. Most of these beliefs of our ancestors had a firm basis in how to be a functioning member of a society and, more importantly, how to be a good steward of the world. These are lessons we could use more of today.

The influx of immigrants to the colonies and later the young United States brought many of their folk beliefs with them. If you study these beliefs even a little bit, it's often plain to see that they are not only similar in the context of European practices but that these ideas were mirrored in Native American beliefs as well as by folks in Africa and Asia. To be fair, in a European context, many different trees were called sycamores, most, like European plane trees, are related, but some like the ancient Greek's and biblical sycamore were possibly a type of fig tree. The important thing, though, is that the attributes of said trees were all similar in a symbolic sense.

Native Americans often called sycamores the "Ghost Tree" for the ghostly appearance of their white limbs in winter. Sycamores were usually considered as protection from wicked spirits, though on occasion they could be used to trap particularly nasty denizens of the otherworld to prevent later trouble. More often it was thought that benevolent spirits lived in sycamores, making them desirable to live close to for the protection they provided.

Many of the early immigrants to North America hailed from Celtic areas – the Irish, Scots, Welsh, and Bretons – where there were strong beliefs about sycamores. The Celts of old associated the sycamore with the world tree that connected the underworld, the world of men, and the abode of the gods. When Christianity spread into Celtic lands the world tree changed to symbolize the connection with heaven, hell and the earth. The sycamore was also associated with the Sidhe, (pronounced "shee" in Irish), or fairy folk. Belief in the Fairy Faith, as it was called, was quite common in Ireland and Scotland and persists into modern times. It was considered good luck to plant sycamores near your home or farm to keep the fairy folk happy.

In Christianity the sycamore (sycamore fig) is seen as a symbol of prosperity, humility, and connecting with the divine. The sycamore was also significant as it was one of the most common trees that provided building lumber in the holy land.

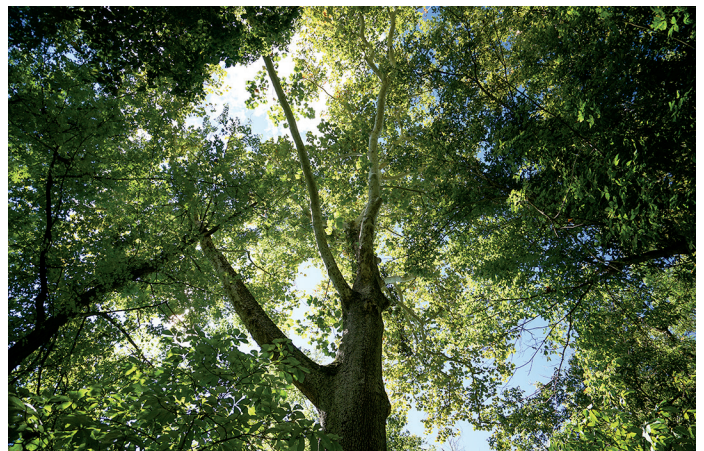
There are many more instances throughout the world of sycamores or trees similar to sycamores having the same attributes as those cited above. In northern climates where sycamores do not grow, the ash tree fulfills almost the same folkloric symbolism as the sycamore, the Norse world tree, Yggdrasil, being the most obvious.



A sycamore anchoring a streambank on Greenspan Run at McCoy's Ferry.



Eventually this tree will wash out in a flood. Its been doing a great job for a few centuries.



One can get an idea of the large size of a sycamore canopy by looking up from underneath.

Conclusion

If you are out anywhere on the towpath, without any doubt, you will see a sycamore. They are everywhere and fulfill many important functions in the ecosystem of the Potomac River drainage. It is also important that we remember where we came from and the effect our ancestors have had on not only our personal lives but on the grand sweep of history. So, spare a thought for the giant wonderful ghost trees you see as you walk or ride past and maybe a little deference for that friendly wood nymph, or good spirit that might be watching.

References:

The Mother Tree Project – mothertreeproject.org

North American Trees, Richard J. Preston, Jr., 1948

Trees of Pennsylvania and the Northeast, Charles Fergus, 2002

Trees, Fungus, and Complexity Science, Trent Carbaugh, 2023,
Along the Towpath Vol LV, Number 2



A sycamore with three trunks.



Sycamore leaf litter is great for small mammals and insects.



Seed pods or "buttons" stay on the tree till winter then shed seeds with small fluff parachutes. These are full size one and a half to two inches in diameter.



Sycamores have leaves in many sizes on the same tree.



A water garden of all native plants built to control flooding. Sycamore trees form a large part of the garden

Thru Bike Ride *or* We Three

By Denny Sloppy

Our October Bike Thru-Ride was October 11 to 16 this year. We've been doing this ride over the Columbus Day Weekend for several years now. For me this marked my 22nd mostly complete through ride on the C&O Canal. The first two trips I made were with family riding three days east to west. The next 20 have been with the C&O Canal Association, taking six days and riding west to east. During my first few through-rides I was baptized with mud. On an early Association ride led by Tom Perry, we were riding and camping in the remnants of a hurricane. Tom's wife, Linda, called Tom from their home in Williamsport, and said "Tom, you wouldn't believe how hard it is raining here!" We not only believed it, we were living it!

The first year I did this ride with the Association we had 20 people. That may have been the largest group we've ever had. This year there were three of us. The three were Emil Moskovich, Denise Yocum and me. We were joined the first day by Steve and Cheryl Nelson and Maureen McElroy. Maureen stayed with us for Day 2, which took us as far as Hancock. With that completed, Maureen has now done the entire C&O Canal in sections. At Hancock that evening we were joined by Deborah Poole and Ken Johnson for dinner at Buddy Lou's. After Day 3 in Williamsport, we were joined by Patrick and Missy Pope, Paul and Bonnie Leatherman, Tom and Linda Perry, and Melody Miles. Melody picked up the three bikers at the Red Roof Inn and drove us to and from Tony's Pizza & Italian Restaurant. *Thank you, Melody!* You may remember Melody from the 2020 ride, when she was one of the "Spice Girls." See Deborah Poole's Thru-Ride Report in the March 2021 *Along the Towpath*. You'll find a wonderful archive of past newsletters at candocanal.org/atpnews/.

Our overnights this year were spent at Canal Cabins in Paw Paw, W.Va., Super 8 in Hancock, Red Roof Inn in Williamsport, Quality Inn in Harpers Ferry, W.Va. and Comfort Suites in Leesburg, Va. For dining we enjoyed The School House Kitchen in Old Town, Big & Tiny's and Liberty Gas Station in Paw Paw, Bill's Place in Little Orleans, Buddy Lou's and Potomac River Grill in Hancock and Tony's Pizza in Williamsport. We enjoyed packed lunches at Fort Frederick while viewing their short movie about the fort's history and at the Horseshoe Bend Hiker Biker campsite. Upon arriving in Harpers Ferry, we decided to go straight to the Rabbit Hole for dinner before climbing the hill to the Quality Inn. On Tuesday, we were disappointed to find the Beans in the Belfry

Café in Brunswick closed due to a city water project. Lunch that day was at Big Belly's in Point of Rocks and dinner that evening was at Del Rio Restaurant in Leesburg. A very special thank you to our friend, Tom Knoerzer, for providing a free shuttle up the Potomac from Whites Ferry to Point of Rocks and then down the other side of the Potomac to Leesburg.

After an early morning breakfast at Comfort Suites and shuttle ride, we began our bike ride at Whites Ferry and headed for Great Falls. There we were met by Arthur Wise and Norman Liebow who brought sandwiches, Cokes, and Krispy Kreme Donuts for eight people. Frank Wodarczyk, Sheryl Etelson, and Maureen McElroy also joined us there for lunch. A big thank you goes to Art and Norman! After lunch Sheryl and Maureen biked with us for a few miles before heading back to Great Falls.

A highlight of the trip mentioned by both Denise and Emil was the campfire Emil built for us at Canal Cabins. It was nice to sit around the campfire and chat with some others who



Denny Sloppy, Denise Yocum, Maureen McElroy, and Emil Moskovich at Mile Marker 184.5 – Photo by Cheryl Nelson



Denise Yocum and Emil Moskovich at Mile Marker 0 – Photo by Denny Sloppy



Table left: Emil Moskovich, Denise Yocum and Norman Liebow; Table right: Arthur Wise, Sheryl Etelson, Maureen McElroy and Frank Wodarczyk – Photo by Denny Sloppy



Steve Nelson, Cheryl Nelson, Maureen McElroy, Denise Yocum, and Emil Moskovich at the Oldtown Schoolhouse Kitchen – Photo by Denny Sloppy

were staying at the cabins. After that we had nice warm cabins and comfy beds to sleep in. Maureen even got to sleep in the bus which is a unique experience. As Emil says, a large or small group feels the magic found on the trip. The canal is the part that makes the experience so much fun. And Denise wants you all to know she won the bet on how many pumps it would take to get water from a hiker biker campsite pump. She got water in four pumps! Emil guessed higher and I guessed even higher than Emil. The other highlight of the trip was the near perfect weather that we had for all six days. We had one-half hour of rain which we spent staying dry under a highway bridge at Brunswick. A highlight for me personally was that with our small group it gave me more time to reminisce about past trips with leaders Tom Perry, Norman Liebow, Jim Heins, Patricia Hopson, Art Wise and so many other Association biking friends over the past 20 years. Many of us have a very special memory of gatherings at Tom & Linda Perry's house (Das Perry-winkle Haus) in Williamsport.

If you've thought about biking the whole canal this trip might work for you. Although we do say it is unsupported, we do offer a luggage shuttle service by Sunshine Luggage Shuttle. All you must carry on your bike are the necessities.

The luggage shuttle is optional. You pay for your own rooms, meals, and any shuttles that we use. Normally, we all meet in Cumberland, park under I-68 for free, bike to Georgetown and shuttle back to Cumberland at the end. You may camp at Purslane Run Hiker-Biker at Paw Paw, the Bunkhouse at C&O Bicycle in Hancock and the Turtle Run Hiker-Biker below Whites Ferry. For campers we recommend getting rooms in Williamsport and Harpers Ferry. We collect a \$25 donation to register for the ride, which we then donate to the C&O Canal Association. This year we collected \$100. We have you sign a waiver form, which is required by the Association. If you'd like to join us for a day or part of day that would be fine as well. I'd just ask you to bring a signed waiver form with you and the registration donation would be optional. We bike an average of about 31 miles per day, with a short day being 26 miles and a long day being close to 40. We average about 9 to 11 mph and take breaks every five or so miles. Due to shuttle constraints, I'm limiting the full ride to 12 people next year. If this bike ride sounds like something you'd like to do I'd be happy to answer any questions you might have. See the C&O Canal Association calendar for more information.



Denise Yocum and Emil Moskovich at the Catocin Aqueduct – Photo by Denny Sloppy



Denise Yocum and Emil Moskovich at the Dam 5 Detour – Photo by Denny Sloppy

Volunteers in Parks

By Jim Heins

Celebrating 100

Sometimes, after spending all day on the canal, possibly driving 200 to 300 miles, helping to carry a 200-pound bench, mixing 250 pounds of concrete to install the bench and then doing it again to install a second bench that day, I feel like I must have reached my hundredth birthday, but NO – this isn't the celebration!

On October 28 of this year, the Volunteers in Parks (VIP) team celebrated their 100th bench installation on the canal. The installations began in 2015 when the C&O Canal Trust was allowed to develop a bench donation program in the park as a way of collecting money to give to the park. The VIPs of our association volunteered to install the benches for free to increase the percentage of the money gained through this donation program that would go to the park.

A small group was formed to do this manual labor, which we refer to as the **Bench Bunch**. Over the past nine years, there have been a few changes due to physical problems or a person moving away, but the core remains and is a fantastic group of canal lovers. On the 28th of October, the 100th bench was put in place by Jim



The Bench Bunch: front (l-r) Jim Biasco, Jim Tomlin and Craig Roberts; back Mike Folliard – Photo by Jim Heins

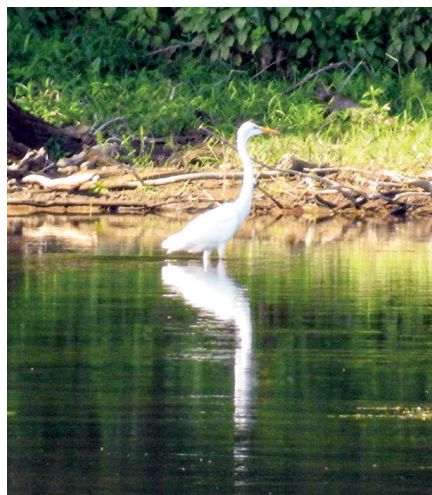
Biasco, Mike Folliard, Jim Tomlin, Craig Roberts and me. Another of the core volunteers is Mike Bucci, who was not able to be there that day. We will end this season with a total of 108 benches installed between Mileposts 5 and 175.

If you are interested in joining the VIP program, please contact me at vip@candocanal.org.

2024 Marion Robertson Memorial Fall Bird Walk

By Kurt Schwarz

The walk was held at Sycamore Landing. It is named in honor of Marion Robertson, who served many years as a director of the Association and chair of the Nature Committee. The day was pleasant and clear, with temperatures in the low 60s and low humidity. Bird activity in the parking area and adjacent areas kept us off the towpath for a short while. The species total for the day was a meager 22. The leader arrived at about 7:20 a.m. and heard prairie warbler and rose-breasted grosbeak calls before the official start of the walk. The bulk of the species noted



Great white egret in the river – Photo by Kurt Schwarz

showed up after the walk started. Early in the walk, before we got to the towpath, a white-eyed vireo put on a nice show. Warblers were few, as were other species. A great white egret was observed in the river. One highlight was a large flock of common grackles, easily topping 500 in number.

Next spring, we will meet at Riley's Lock in late April. The location for the September bird walk will be announced at a later date. Registration will be a new feature for subsequent birding trips.

On the Level

By Steven Dean

This report covers level walker activity for August through October. Earlier reports are included in some cases. Any reports for activity performed during November or later will be in the March, 2025 Along the Towpath.

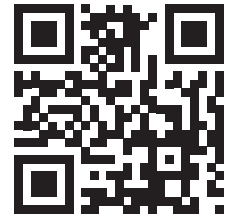
The Level Walker program is a long-term Association volunteer activity and the oldest volunteer program on the park. Level walkers periodically visit their levels and assess conditions, pick up trash and perform light trail clean-up. Many level walkers are long-time volunteers. Level walkers must be members in the C&O Canal Association, comply with NPS regulations and walk at least once a year to remain active level walkers.



Broad winged hawk – Photo by Paul Petkus

Recent level walker findings are typical for late summer and fall. Level walkers observed conditions on 26 of the 69 levels and noted extensive summer throughout the park. Projects and responses to weather events and emergent conditions from weather or structural issues can affect tow-path travel. Park visitors, whether for recreational or volunteer purposes, should always check the Plan Your Visit link (provided on page 27).

Thanks to all who participate in our Level Walker volunteer program! As a team, your efforts make a significant contribution to the park. For further information about the Level Walker program, please email lw@candocanal.org or use the QR code at right to visit candocanal.org/level/.



August to October 2024 Level Walker Activity

Level 2 Incline Plane to Lock 5: Kamile Kay reports June through October: I went on multiple walks each month. The towpath was the cleanest I have ever seen it in June and July. No towpath issues were reported. The previously reported graffiti on the Custis Trail pedestrian bridge by Arizona Ave was removed. It was quite beautiful out there.

Levels 3 and 4 Lock 5 to Lock 14: Allyson Miller reports May through September: I conducted several walks at various times during May through September. There are 72 potholes/ruts of considerable size on Levels 3 and 4. They are worse on Level 3 between Lock 5 and the kayak run just below the pumping station. This area is frequently used by heavy trucks – the fire and rescue departments use this for training. Locks 7, 8, 9, to some extent 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 are all in danger of being overwhelmed by weeds and trees that are taking over and starting to affect the integrity of the lock walls. Many of the gates are broken/rotten or just missing. I'm a weed warrior and I have attempted to cut the weeds off and around the lock mechanisms, but the bypass flumes are overrun and if we want to preserve history, I think these locks need more attention and it's not safe for me to attempt to do anything on the lock walls. I saw some wild turkeys near Lock 11 in May, the first time I've ever seen them in this area! Lock 10 has a newly

reinforced bridge (the 1st bridge from the parking lot). Lock 10 has a new water fountain.

Level 4 Cabin John Creek to Lock 14: Larry Heflin reports August through October: The towpath was monitored over numerous walks, through all conditions. No significant issues were reported during this period.

Level 9 Lock 22 to Seneca Aqueduct: Sylvia and Andrea Diss report Sept. 12: Numerous visitors were out. Some bikers were riding fast and without warning. Several herons, an eagle and numerous turtles were observed. **Louis Robbins reports Oct. 4:** It was a nice early fall day. There was light towpath usage except for large group making a trip from Pittsburgh to Washington. A contractor was removing the log jam at the Seneca Aqueduct. Issues noted included: poor condition of beams on both bridges at Violettes Lock; potholes in Seneca parking lot; Lock 24 and Inlet Lock 2 both need pointing of stonework; Seneca lock house doors have water damage; and fencing on the southwest corner of the aqueduct is not secure.

Level 10 Seneca Aqueduct to Mile 25: Judith Walton reports Sept. 2: Since it was Labor Day weekend, many people were enjoying the tow path – lots of walkers, bikers, picnickers and people fishing. I found two unidentifiable objects: two orange

disks attached by a rope. It was in front of a tree that was marked with an orange mark, I didn't know if it was another way to mark the tree or if someone just decided to dump boating equipment. Someone left a large bag of horse manure. I removed it.

Level 12 Sycamore Landing to Edwards Ferry: Pat Hopson, with Carol Ivory, Ron Wise, and Frank Wodarczyk, reports Sept. 1: Two of us met Sycamore Landing and the others met at Edwards Ferry. We covered the entire level from Sycamore Landing to Edwards Ferry, the beach area at Sycamore Landing and the Edwards Ferry area. The parking lot at Sycamore Landing had minimal trash but a lot of mud holes due to recent rains. We found very little trash at the Edwards Ferry parking area, at the Goose Creek Locks, and at the Chisel Branch Hiker-Biker. Undoubtedly, the light trash load results from the fact that vehicle access to the Edwards Ferry parking lot was still closed on the date of this walk. *It has since reopened.* We noted that the lock walls continue to deteriorate at the Goose Creek River Locks. The Jarboe Store ruins were in good condition with no graffiti. The Lock 25 house was in good condition. It appears that the Canal Quarters rentals were suspended during the bridge construction. It was a humid morning, but not very hot (about 80 degrees), and the rain held off, thankfully. We all remarked that it was a lovely day.

Level 13 Edwards Ferry to Harrison Island: Liz Wagner reports Sept. 17: The new bridge over Lock 25 was recently completed and access to the car park and boat launch is open. The towpath continues to be well maintained. There was some surface wear between Mileposts 32 and 33, but standing water or ruts were seen. A management crew was actively cutting some overgrown areas along the level. Most of the prism has no standing water due to the lack of rain over the summer. The wooden bridge over Broad Run continues to show wear. Several deck planks are beginning to warp. Some late flowering plants were seen along the length of the level. These included jewelweed, white snakeroot, wing stem, bear's foot, chicory and field thistle.

Level 15 Whites Ferry to Lock 26: Jon Wolz reports Aug. 5, Sept. 12 and 14, and Oct. 11: There has been no progress made on the grounds of the former Sportsman's Club. The nineteen cabins are still standing and have been vandalized. I was informed that they will be removed in 2025. Small trees growing from the stones and stone warehouse dock at the Whites Ferry Granary and need to be removed. Additionally, trees need to be removed from the historic bridge abutments. Weeds and undergrowth were removed from some of the culverts on the level.

Level 16 Lock 26 to Monocacy Aqueduct: Jon Wolz reports Aug. 20 and Sept. 26: In August the canal prism had a higher level of water as compared to other months due to recent rains. In September it was once again extremely low from the old power plant entrance to Lock 26. Small trees are growing down from the top of the stone wall at the Monocacy Granary

that need to be clipped. Montgomery County recently tarred and chipped the Mouth of Monocacy Road. It seems they dumped and spread what was left of their stone chips at the Monocacy Parking lot. There is a pothole that needs filling in the parking lot.

Level 18 Nolands Ferry to Point of Rocks: Bob Carpenter reports Oct. 29: It was a nice day for an autumn walk on the towpath – sunny and mild with good autumn colors. Overall, the towpath was in very good condition (firm but dusty at times) with moderate leaf cover but very little trash. As usual, there was a bit more trash at the Nolands Ferry boat ramp, with most of the trash collected at the Point of Rocks boat ramp and parking lot. There was a very light volume of bicyclists considering it was such a beautiful and pleasant autumn weekday. The large pothole on the berm side of the access bridge to the Point of Rocks parking lot desperately needs to be filled (as I've previously reported).

Level 19 Point of Rocks to Catoctin Aqueduct: Stephen and Deborah Jones report August through October: The level was walked several times during this reporting period. It generally has light trash. There was a washout below the Catoctin Aqueduct in August that was quickly repaired. English ivy is an issue on this level. The towpath was in good condition. Several trees were marked for removal. All ash trees on this level have died.

Level 22 Lock 31 to Lock 33: Paul Durham reports Sept. 19, Oct. 8 and Oct. 31: The weather was cool in September and the towpath was busy for a weekday. Fall wildflowers were blooming. Visitation was higher in October with the fall foliage on display. The towpath surface was good, with minor mud in a few places. No problems were reported with waysides or structures.

Level 23 Lock 33 to Dam 3: Arthur Tsien reports Aug. 22 and Sept. 29: These were my third and fourth walks of this level in 2024. On both dates the weather was pleasant and the level was in good condition. The stone wall project downstream of Lock 34 appeared to be done but a temporary debris barrier across the canal just upstream of the repair area was still in place. There is some erosion on the slope at Lock 33 and in a few spots elsewhere, usually around runoffs or informal trails down to the river. Nevertheless, the resurfaced towpath continues to be in good condition. In September I removed and discarded an inflatable tube or boat from near the Armory Dam abutment. Dragging it 2 ½ miles to my car at Dargan Bend provided some extra aerobic exercise. **Paul Durham reports Sept. 20, Oct. 8 and Oct. 31:** Typically, on this level, visitor activity starts rising significantly after 10:00 a.m. Most walkers are headed for the trail to go up to Maryland Heights. No problems were observed on the level. The wayside sign at Lock 33 and the crossover bridge is illegible. Discarded inflatable boats were found along the level.

Levels 28 and 29 Lock 38 to Snyders Landing: Brigitta Shroyer and Joel Anderson report Sept. 8: It was sunny in the upper 50s, with the feeling of fall in the air. We passed many

cyclists, walkers and dog walkers. All trash found was at Snyders Landing and was mostly beer bottles and cans. The towpath was in good condition. There was overgrowth at Lock 39, but it appears that the NPS recently cut back the trees to the upper level of the lock.

Level 30 Snyders Landing to Lock 40: **Charles Connolly reports Sept. 2:** It was a beautiful day with the most visitors I've ever seen on the level. The towpath was in excellent condition and virtually trash-free.

Level 33 Dam 4 to McMabons Mill: **Dick Stoner and grandson report Aug. 15 and 21:** The weather was great for August, though both trips were made early in the morning to avoid extreme afternoon heat. Several pairs of bikers and plenty of fishermen were encountered. Of note, some summertime wildflowers within the cliffs were in bloom and make for some nice stops to observe and study. Trash was mostly from fisherman, which is sad to see. We retrieved random pieces of plastic wrappers lodged in the brush off the paved trail just south of McMahan's Mill, where we met another individual who gathered trash and discarded fishing gear. McMahan's Mill is popular this year. The towpath repair was a successful project that opened the area to more use.

Level 36 Lock 43 to Falling Waters: **Dick Ebersole reports Aug. 13 and 25:** The towpath was in good condition but needed mowing. The Lock 43 house appeared to be in good condition, but the gutters need to be cleaned out. There were numerous invasive plants on this level.

Level 38 Lock 44 to High Rock Quarry: **George and Mary Kennett report May 28:** There were numerous bikers and walkers on the level. Several painted and snapping turtles were observed. There was extensive dog waste on the level.

Level 42 Four Locks to McCoy Ferry: **Jack Ebersole reports Sept. 5:** The towpath was dry and clear, with little trash. The campgrounds were cleaner than usual and were being mowed on the day of my visit. Stilt grass is getting tall on this level. The Lock 50 tender shanty remains in poor condition. The smell of Paw Paw was in the air as the fruit ripened.

Level 44 Fort Frederick to Ernstville: **Jim Biasco reports Sept. 21:** It was a beautiful day for a walk. The towpath has been resurfaced and is in excellent condition. The signs on the post at the Ernstville access are both missing. The post is still there. The level was very clean.

Level 46 Licking Creek Aqueduct to Little Pool: **Rick and Wendy Duke report Sept. 7:** There were not many changes from the last report. A significant growth of grasses around canal structures prevented close examination of several structures. Erosion in the prism by Culverts 160 and 170 continues. Spicebush and berries were plentiful & ripening. Paw Paw fruit was limited on this level and not yet ripe. Much prior storm damage was evident. Downed trees and debris had been cleared from the towpath. Multiple mounds of towpath surface materials were seen piled along the prism side of the towpath intermittently.

Levels 47 and 48 Little Pool to Round Top Cement Mill: **Philip M. Clemans reports Sept. 10:** The level was very clean. The towpath was in good condition. I encountered a number of thru-riders, mostly from Pittsburgh. The cement mill and Bowles House both appeared to be in good condition. I mostly heard birds but didn't see many; A few rabbits were seen but no deer.

Level 49 Round Top Cement Mill to Lock 53: **Paul Petkus reports Sept. 14 and Oct. 19:** It was a nice afternoon for an outing on the September walk. The towpath was relatively busy with bicyclists throughout the afternoon. The towpath was in good condition. I didn't see any change in the condition of the structures. The condition of the picnic table at the campground continues to degrade. The bench at Mile 128.95 has a small amount of graffiti on it. Spotted lanternflies were seen at the lock. I saw one dozen butterfly species during the afternoon. Pileated woodpeckers appear to reside in a couple of the trees in the prism in Mile 127. Nothing of concern was observed during this outing. I visited Level 49 in October after the NPS volunteer appreciation picnic in Hancock. *Many thanks to the NPS for hosting that event.* It was a beautiful afternoon. No significant changes were noted for the structures on the level. The number of park visitors I saw on the level was relatively higher than usual. The surface of the towpath was in good condition. I saw only one puddle of any significance, although it was not very large.

Level 54 Lock 59 to Lock 60: **Paul Petkus reports Sept. 2:** It was a nice day to visit the park. The surface of the towpath was in good condition overall. Some bike tread marks were observed in scattered areas. A large branch blocked most of the towpath at Mile 148.4. There appeared to be some vandalism at the Stickpile Hill hiker-biker camp. Both observations were reported to park maintenance. No changes were noted in the structures. Spotted lanternflies were observed across the level. Gypsy moth evidence was seen in Mile 149. It was a good day for viewing butterflies and I observed ten species.

Level 55 Lock 60 to Culvert 208: **Paul Petkus reports Aug. 23:** It was a fine summer visit to the park. The towpath was in good condition in Levels 53 through 55. No obstructions or hazards were present. It was a great day for nature viewing. The highlight of the outing was the sighting of a broad-winged hawk in a tree adjacent to Lock 60. Deer, muskrats, turtles, frogs, butterflies, dragonflies and a rabbit were also viewed throughout the day. There were no concerns for the level. Some of the dead trees along the towpath and at the lock were marked for removal. None of them appeared to be an immediate safety concern.

Roving Level Walker: **Mark Stover reports August through October:** Mark walks various parts of the entire canal on a regular basis. Downed trees and other issues are frequently reported.

C&O Canal Association

Calendar of Events – 2025

C&OCA Business	June 1, Sun., Board Meeting , 1 p.m. Williamsport, Md. Check calendar at www.candocanal.org for details.
C&OCA Hike and Dinner or Other Event	
Non-C&OCA Event	Aug. 3, Sun., Board Meeting , 1:00 p.m. via Zoom. Check calendar at www.candocanal.org for details.
C&OCA Bike Trip	Sept. 21 – 25, Sun. – Thu., World Canals Conference Buffalo, N.Y. Further Info: www.wcc2025buffalo.com
Feb. 2, Sun., Board Meeting , 1:00 p.m. via Zoom. Check calendar at www.candocanal.org for details.	Oct. 5, Sun., Board Meeting , 1 p.m. Williamsport, Md. Check calendar at www.candocanal.org for details.
March 22, Sat., C&O Canal Association Annual Meeting Upper Montgomery County Fire Department 19801 Beallsville Road, Beallsville, Md. Refer to Page 7 and www.candocanal.org for details	Oct. 10-15, Fri.-Wed., Through Bike Ride , Cumberland to Georgetown. No sag wagon. Reservations required. Limited number of riders. We ride 30 to 40 miles per day for six days. Participants must be willing to accept instruction from leaders before and during the trip, and must come equipped with recommended bicycles and have clothing for warm, cold, and rainy weather. Denny Sloppy, dennysloppy@yahoo.com or 814-577-5877.
April 13, Sun., Board Meeting , 1 p.m. Glen Echo Town Hall, 6106 Harvard Ave. Check calendar at www.candocanal.org for details.	Oct. 25, Sat., Heritage Hike and Dinner , Details will be provided in the September <i>Along the Towpath</i> and at www.candocanal.org Contact: programs@candocanal.org .
April 26, Sat., Douglas Hike and Dinner , Details will be provided in the March <i>Along the Towpath</i> and at www.candocanal.org Contact: programs@candocanal.org .	Dec. 7, Sun., Board Meeting , 1 p.m. Glen Echo Town Hall, 6106 Harvard Ave. Check calendar at www.candocanal.org for details.
May 31, Sat., President's Lunch , 11:00 a.m. Bill's Place, Little Orleans, Md. Details will be provided in the March <i>Along the Towpath</i> and at www.candocanal.org Contact: programs@candocanal.org .	

Visit Facebook and the Association web site and check upcoming issues of *Along the Towpath* for additional event listings and for further details of scheduled events
Contact programs@candocanal.org for questions.

Important Information About Association Events –

- » *Liability waivers are required for many Association activities.*
- » *Hikes require proper footwear. Paddling, hiking and biking participants are responsible for their own equipment, food and water.*
- » *Reservations and/or advance fees are required for some events. Reservations must be received prior to the listed closing date. Advance fees are non-refundable after the reservation closing date.*
- » *Participants must arrive on-time for outdoor event start times. Outdoor events are usually rain or shine, however in extreme cases may be canceled for weather travel conditions or other reasons. Check www.candocanal.org/calendar/ (use QR code at right), contact the event host for updates, or visit Facebook @ [candocanal.org](https://www.facebook.com/candocanal.org).*
- » *Participants are expected to comply with local health or safety related rules.*
- » *The Association cannot accommodate requests for variations from established event agendas, transportation and arrangements, including alternate pick-up or drop-off locations.*



C&O CANAL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
C&O Canal National Historical Park Headquarters

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C&O Canal NHP Contact Information
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Deputy Superintendent Ed Wenschhof
Superintendent's Assistant Erin Cowan
Chief Ranger Vacant
Chief of Business Management Ben Helwig
Chief of Resource Management Andrew Landsman
Chief of Maintenance Jim Yelton
Chief of Interpretation, Education and Volunteers.... Christiana Hanson
Chief of Professional Services Joseph Reed
Partnerships Coordinator Vacant
Volunteer Program Manager Emily Tyner-Hewitt
Cultural Resources Manager and Historian Justin Ebersole
Safety Officer John Adams
Supervisory Park Ranger (Law Enforcement) Joshua Cunningham

Palisades District

Mile 0 (Tidelock) to Mile 42.19 (Monocacy River)

Interpretive Supervisor Nicolette Talley
Supervisory Recreation Fee Specialist Evan Costanza
Georgetown Partnerships Coordinator Shaun Lehmann

Western Maryland District

Mile 42.19 (Monocacy River) to Mile 184.5 (Cumberland)

Interpretive Supervisor Joshua Nolen

Visiting the Park

The C&O Canal NHP is open 365 days a year, but may be closed entirely or in sections at times due to weather conditions, towpath issues or repairs. Park visitor centers are located at Georgetown, Great Falls, Brunswick, Williamsport, Hancock and Cumberland. They may be closed seasonally or due to staffing limitations.

Check park status before visiting.

www.nps.gov/choh/planyourvisit/index.htm
(QR Code at right) provides information about park facilities, towpath local closures, NPS events, canal boat programs, visitor centers, camping and other visit related information. The park information phone number is 301-739-4200.



Other Useful Contacts

Canal Quarters Program – www.canaltrust.org/programs/canal-quarters/
Canal Towns – www.canaltrust.org/programs/canal-towns/

24-HOUR EMERGENCY:

911 or 866-677-6677

REPORT SAFETY HAZARDS OR TOWPATH ISSUES:

HAZARDS CHO_Hazards@nps.gov

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C&O CANAL ASSOCIATION

Membership in C&OCA is open to all persons with an interest in the C&O Canal, the C&O Canal National Historical Park and the Potomac River Basin. Annual membership dues are: \$25 individual, \$35 family, and \$50 patron, assessed on a calendar-year basis, and include subscription to the newsletter. Dues should be mailed to the C&O Canal Association or paid on-line. C&OCA is a non-profit organization as defined by section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and all contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. A copy of our current financial statement is available upon request by contacting the C&OCA at the address above or emailing inquiries@candocanal.org. Documents and information submitted to the State of Maryland under the Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act are available from the Office of the Secretary of State for the cost of copying and postage.

C&OCA maintains a web page at www.candocanal.org. The webmaster is website@candocanal.org. Inquiries can be directed to the Association at inquiries@candocanal.org.

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President: Bill Holdsworth, president@candocanal.org

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Note the “Membership Expires” date on your address. If it is a 2022, 2023 or 2024 date, see Page 2 for renewal details.



Persons who have visited Four Locks will recognize Culvert 139 – it is one of the few road culverts that are still in use. Located at Mile 108.74, it is half way on the 1/10 mile level between Locks 48 and 49. Vehicles can pass through this 12-foot span culvert to access Prathers Neck, the boat ramp and the parking area for Four Locks and towpath day use. Above – the entry (berm side) arch. Middle – a detail of the ring stones and barrel. Below – the exit (towpath side) arch. Photos by Steven Dean



ALONG THE TOWPATH
Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Association
www.candocanal.org

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