WCC/GUB 6/5/03

My name is Susan Johnston I live at 4621 N 37th Street in Arlington, VA.

My connection with WCC goes back only about 12 years. My son, then 11 years old, joined the WCC Summer Paddling Camp and took me out on kayak adventures on the Potomac. My husband and I joined WCC to learn to paddle flatwater racing kayaks and have gone on to race in the Masters class in the US and Canada. Our son outgrew the summer camp and went on to summer racing and training at the Olympic Training Center in Lake Placid, NY. When the children's Summer Paddling Camp was not offered for a couple of years I helped start it up again, remembering how much our son had enjoyed it. I directed the camp for 5 years. I held the position of Commodore at the Canoe Club for 3 years, being involved with the training program and acquiring boats for people to learn sprint racing.

In my experience with the summer camp and training of new paddlers, much of what we do depends on suitable water conditions; the absence of speed boat wakes and water traffic in the area upstream of our dock. Our sport is called Flatwater Sprint Racing. The racing boats are narrow and unstable, as keeping your balance is part of the challenge of the light, fast boats. Rowers across the river with their accompanying launches produce wakes, but ones we can deal with. Launches and rowing shells starting 25 yards from our dock make virtually impossible conditions for beginning and intermediate paddlers. We have paddlers in a range of ages from just-turned-10 to 83 years old. Although Coach Johnson assures us the rowers' lanes will be structured to give us access to the lanes we must use to reach the upriver area, this seems impossible given the proximity of wakes from shells and launches from the proposed facility.

In conclusion I would like to respond to the testimony of 4 previous witnesses;

Mr. Myers: "No one will be denied any form of access as a result of the Georgetown University boathouse." WCC will be denied access to racing lanes due to the protrusion of GUB docks.

Mr. O'Donnell: "This is one of the least intrusive of water sports." Because of the sheer

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numbers of rowers and their motor launches above Key Bridge the sport has become intrusive.

Ms Conraddy:"WCC training lanes won't be affected because GU crews come at 6 am when paddlers aren't on the water."It seems unrealistic to expect that GU crews will be on the water only at 6 am. Our teams also train early in the day because of summer heat, so it's very likely that canoes and kayaks will be out at the same time in the months of May through October. Therefore WCC training will be affected.

Mr. Allan:"The dock doesn't get in the way of other river users." A dock extending 70 feet into the river with permanent pilings does indeed block the lanes WCC has used for 100 years. Permanent dock structures, unlike the docks that are removed after the primary training and racing season, affect the hydrology of the river, quite probably causing silting in the area.

The Washington Canoe Club sent the first canoe team to the 1924 Olympics. Our club has sent athletes to every Olympics since then. Our sport is Olympic Flatwater Canoe and Kayak. The proposed location of the GUB compromises our ability to train and race. Next year WCC celebrates 100 years in this location, a location chosen for the water conditions needed for our sport. While sympathetic to the idea of introducing more people to water sport of the self-propelled variety, and GU's need for their own facility to sustain and grow their program, I find it counterproductive to cripple one sport to benefit another.

Thank you for listening to my testimony.