



The Sycamore Islander

June, 2000

Volume 79, No. 6

June Meeting

The May meeting dealt with only routine matters and then adjourned to view a top notch slide presentation on the new fish ladder constructed at the Little Falls Brookmont Dam just below the Island. The meeting was also noteworthy for the open grill before the meeting which provided nourishment for members and a relaxed atmosphere from which to begin the meeting. Doc has been encouraging this idea for some time and has promised to fire up the grill before future meetings. A wonderful idea, and one which should be taken advantage of.

The June 14th, 8:00 p.m. meeting on the Island will address the issue of renovation of the caretaker's quarters. All are encouraged to come to lend their voices and opinions to the debate.

Minutes of May 10 Meeting

Attendance: Trip Reid, Alan Gelb, Gerry Barton, Betty Burchell, Marcia Loeb, George Loeb, Bill Eichbaum, Al Brown, Johnna Robinson, Dave Winer, Peggy Thomson, Charlotte Brewer, Doc Taliaferro, Ned Goddard, Betsy Stephens, Ralph Stephens, Jim Drew and Maria Stenzel.

The meeting was called to order by President Tryon Wells at 8:15 PM. The membership approved the Minutes of the previous meeting.

Membership Secretary's Report:

The report of the Membership Secretary was given by Tryon Wells, in Peter Winkler's absence. There are 44 families with wait-list passes this year (there were 68 last year). No applications for membership will be accepted until next January. All persons who sent applications before April 30 have been added to the wait list. The membership list stands at 154, so Ljubisa and Catherine Vitkovic were voted in as new members. There was some discussion about who should talk with new members and how they should become acquainted with the mores of the club. The issue of orientation is being dealt with by a group who will make a recommendation at a future meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Alan Gelb reported that finances are in order and commented that he was renewing insurance policies with current values for the buildings.

The Sycamore Islander is a monthly newsletter of the Montgomery Sycamore Island Club. Articles, photographic essays, drawings, announcements, letters to the editors—any materials of interest to the membership and waiting list—are welcome and should be sent to the Editors, Jane and David Winer, 5927 Onondaga Road, Bethesda, MD 20816. Text and graphics may be sent as email attachments to davidwiner@erols.com in all common formats. The deadline for inclusion in a particular issue is receipt at the Editors' address ten days prior to the second-Wednesday monthly meeting of the club. **Earlier submissions receive priority.**

Minutes of May 10 Meeting (continued)

Supervisor of Parties and Camping's Report: Bill Eichbaum, reported that there have been fewer party applications this year so far.

The Downriver Race: Will be held May 21st. This race has traditionally been hosted by the Canoe Cruisers and Sycamore Island. A call for volunteers was made to monitor the canoes and the clubhouse. President Tryon Wells reiterated that no items are to be sold on the island.

Caretaker's Quarters: A committee will be convened to put together issues involved in rebuilding the caretakers' quarters on the upper floor, out of flood danger. This committee will report to the membership in the future.

Club Databases: The databases will be consolidated and put on-line, with due concern for privacy issues.

Ferry: A list of members and applicants with Waiting List Passes will be kept on the ferry with the sign-in sheet.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM, followed by an excellent slide show program about the new Little Falls fish ladder was presented by Larry Leasner of the MD Dept of Natural Resources.

—Johnna Robinson, Acting Secretary

Letter to the Editors

I spent many happy hours on and in the water around Sycamore Island while I was in high school. My parents were (and are) members, so I was not among the trespassers/explorers I have frequently seen mentioned in the minutes of the Island meetings. I read the minutes each month with growing concern about the perceived solution for problems such as dealing with trespassers, unruly teenagers, abuse of Club property, and the large party issues.

It seems that the club's response is to make more rules to prevent bad behavior. We especially, living in the nation's capital, should know that we cannot legislate behavior. Even if we could come up with a list of transgressions covering the range of unintentional to deliberate, a glaring question remains: who should enforce all these rules? The Caretaker? Certainly, as the one who tends to the island, balancing Nature's and our interests, the Caretaker knows an infrac-

tion of acceptable behavior (the written rule or the common sense) when he sees one. *What about the rest of us?* I know, without consulting a rulebook, that (for example) bouncing the balls on the pool table is a bad idea. It doesn't matter to me whether the kids doing this are thoughtless or malicious, I would ask them to stop. I would ask their names, find the parents and talk to them, and report the incident to the caretaker.

Confronting people about their misbehavior is hard to do, but for Sycamore Island to continue to feel like a retreat, we should all feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for what goes on. Instead of making rules for other people to enforce, let's take action: get to know one another, use the island well, and address problems when we see them.

Louisa Tran
Waiting List Member
(daughter of the *Islander* editors)

Quick Fixin's

—by Jane Winer

With 3 charcoal grills available on the Island, we can grill hamburgers, fish or chicken anytime, but comes a time when we aren't inclined to cook out. Instead, we look elsewhere for sandwiches or supper to carry down to the Island.

Glen Echo Center, just up the street at MacArthur & Goldsboro, is home to *Sushi Kanpai*, which will take your order for sushi *a la carte* (fish is raw or cooked, as you like--or vegetarian sushi) at 301-320-4676. However, if you just walk in, you can walk right out again with one of the "specials" (different each day) in a lunchbox or dinnerbox for a reasonable sum. Do consider adding to your selection one of the excellent salads on display: the green seaweed or the *edamane* salad, for example. Soybeans--*edamane*--look like plump baby limas with delicious taste and texture. USA TODAY recently identified the vegetable as be-



Willie Aquino of *Sushi Kanpai* holds a carry-out lunch box fit for an Islander.

Sashimi is also available in plates of five pieces, or *a la carte*.

ing on the brink of "going mainstream in salad bars." You can say you had it first from *Kanpai*. Hours for this treasure of an Asian carry-out: Monday--Saturday, 11 am to 7 pm; Sunday, noon to 6.

Pizza may be the first choice of fast foods to carry aboard SS Ferry (there are 2 pizza providers within a quick drive of the Island): *Glen Echo Pizza & Subs* is next door to *Sushi Kanpai* in the Glen Echo Center. The pizza is so popular at lunchtime that we were not able to get in the door. Later, we learned that favorite subs are the Italian Cold Cut, and a Glen Echo

version thereof, made with turkey, ham, roast beef and provolone; the favorite hot sub, predictably, is *Steak & Cheese*. Call Glen Echo Pizza Monday thru Saturday from 10 am to 9 pm, Sunday, 11 to 7 at 301-263-0414, so you can do an end run around the long line of folks waiting to place an order.

On your way north on MacArthur Boulevard (across the One-Way Meigs Bridge), you will find *Captain's Market* on your right. A convenience store, *Captain's* is open early, so if you are looking for live bait and/or a hot breakfast, or later in the day, a good hamburger, this is the place for you. Under new management within the year, *Captain's* offers the best prices available in local fast food/carry-out fare. Cold sandwiches are made to order on Ottenberg's bread. While you wait, you can sit on a comfortable stool and admire the jewel-like African violets in the windows. You will have lots of company--*Captain's* is a bar-



The *Captain's Market* — Go on in! This was once a neighborhood grocery similar to the *Sycamore Store*.

gain. Open Monday to Friday, 6 am to 7:30 pm; Saturday 7:30 to 6:30, and Sunday, 10 to 4:30.

Upstream from *Captain's*, MacArthur Plaza sits at the intersection of Seven Locks Road & the Boulevard, home to the *Bethesda Co-op*, *The Market on the Boulevard*, and a *Pizza Hut*. The *Co-op* keeps its lease until January 2001, so rejoice, we have six

more months to enjoy our very own most marvelous market before it moves away. The *Co-op* offers some of the best breads and cheeses, some of the best croissants (chocolate, raisin, apple or plain) and dips, spreads and pestos we have ever tasted. The *Co-op* is a haven for strict vegetarians--where else can you find "Missing" Egg Salad? For lunch, a piece of fresh fruit, a carry-out sandwich from refrigerated shelves or your own choice of bread and cheese, mean you can't go wrong at the *Co-op*, open Monday to Saturday, 9 am to 9 pm, Sunday, 9 to 8.

MacArthur Plaza also features the unique *Market on the Boulevard*. When *Hannibal's* closed a year or so ago, the *Market* absorbed the space and accommodates those of us who like to tarry awhile with a good cup of coffee, a muffin and the Sunday paper. You can get all sorts of things here, good breads & cheese, cold cuts or sushi, cooked or ready-to-be-cooked fish and shellfish, beautiful beef—the *Market* has it. If you want a sandwich to take back to the Island, it's hard to beat a "Cabin John Club," for example. Made with ham & turkey, Swiss cheese, cranberry and onion, bacon, mayo, with lettuce on



The upscale *Market on the Boulevard* features a tantalizing display case of freshly prepared take-outs, just right for an impromptu picnic on the Island.

pumpernickel, it is delicious--unless you'd rather have the "Great Falls" made with salami, Black Forest ham, prosciutto, provolone, lettuce, tomato, onion & Italian dressing on a French roll!

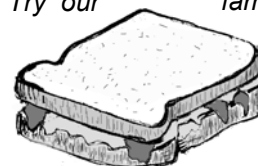
Having spent the morning looking at food, tasting salads, imagining sandwiches, I finally fell for the *Market's* "Clara Barton": Muenster, avocado, lettuce, tomato, sprouts, onion & dill sauce on whole wheat pita. One is encouraged to "Build Your Own Sandwich" at the *Market*, but why bother? The Big Board is a list of blue chippers. Sitting at a table at the *Market*, enjoying a respite from reviewing the local carry-outs, with coffee and a sandwich, I fell into a reverie about what I was going to go for the next time I sailed into the *Market*: a "Wild Bird" perhaps? or maybe the "Avenel"—or the "Congressional"? By the time I came to, it was time to go home—and, by the way, I didn't make it down to the Island that day! *Market* hours: Monday to Friday, 6:30 am to 9 pm; Saturday, 7 to 8, Sunday, 7 to 7. Phone: 301-229-2526.

FYI: Not counting the pizza carry-outs, some of the establishments above offer more than ready-to-eat food. *Sushi Kanpai*, for instance, in spite of its small size, offers a selection of fresh Asian vegetables and, of course, wonderful fresh fish. The staff encourages sushi enthusiasts to learn to make their own, so *Kanpai* has everything to do so, including the seaweed papers and sticks for holding and turning the sushi. *Kanpai* also prepares dazzling party platters (call ahead, of course), and Willie Aquino wanted us to know that the same outfit runs the *Tako Grill* in Bethesda. "Tako," he told us, "means 'octopus'". *Tako Grill* is not a Mexican restaurant!"

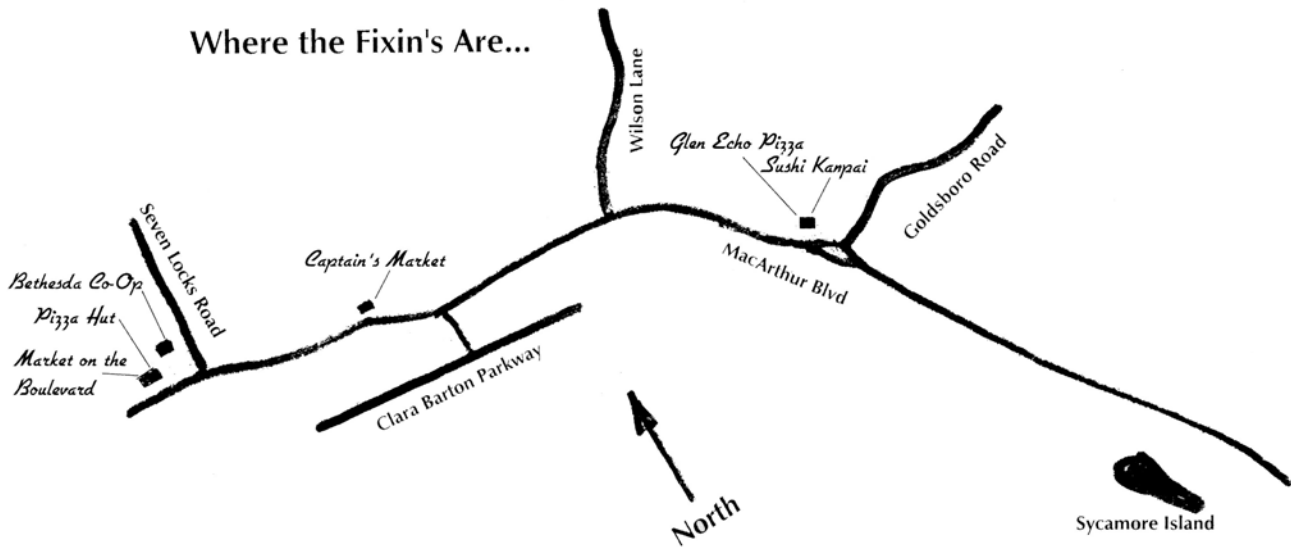
The Bethesda Co-op is a vegetarian market and grocery store. What they offer is, as often as possible, organic. The *Co-op* carries dairy products you can't find elsewhere and many alternatives to dairy. The dried foods: fruits, nuts, grains, spices, herbs, etc. are outstanding.

The Market on the Boulevard carries gourmet items of all sorts, and will prepare party platters as well as cater. Phone: 301-229-2526.

Try our famous



Peanut Butter & Jelly Sandwich !



James Super To Compete in U.S Canoe and Kayak Team National Races.

For the fourth year, James Super (13) will be competing on the Washington Canoe Club "bantam team" (10- to 14-year-olds) in the annual flatwater sprint national competition held by the U.S. Canoe and Kayak Team. This year's competition from August 7 to 11 will be at Lake Lanier near Gainesville, Georgia (a warmer venue than the 1999 races at Lake Placid, New York, and the 1998 races at Green Lake in Seattle, Washington). James and his bantam teammates will be racing in 1-person, 2-person, and 4-person flatwater canoe and kayak events. Last year they made it to finals or semifinals in all events they entered, and the 4-person kayak bantam team was the 4th fastest in the country. With team members already showing marked improvement in their times in all events over last year, they are looking forward to a strong performance in August. Good luck, James!

A Few Slots Still Open in Washington Canoe Club's Summer Paddling Camp.

The Washington Canoe Club Paddle Sport Program teaches flatwater canoe and kayak skills in the annual summer camp program, along with activities in water safety, swimming, hiking, and field trips. The camp is open to children 10 to 14 years old. Instruction is geared to the child's experience level, from new to experienced paddlers. A few slots are still open in the first session (June 26 - July 14) and second session (July 17 - August 4). The camp runs from 8:30 - 4:30, with extended hours available until 6:00 p.m.

James Super, who has attended every summer since 1997, highly recommends the camp as a chance to have a lot of fun and learn to paddle at the same time. The Washington Canoe Club is located in the picturesque green and white frame boathouse just upriver of Key Bridge on the Potomac River. The web site is: www.wcanoe.org. Note that Alexandra and Mike Harbold (a married couple who are former Olympic gold medalists and current members of the Washington Canoe Club) are competing now for slots on this year's U.S. Olympic team. For information about the paddling camp, contact Susan Johnston at 703-525-0803.

Classified

CANOE - 15' Grumman, aluminum, very good condition. See in canoe shed, rack I-2. Best offer. Call Dallas Finn, 301-229-6652.

— Sue Super

Notes from the Island

Mon 1 May Next to the bulletin board upstairs there is a wooden contraption that looks as though it might be a magazine rack. Members should note that this is now the official place for the red binder that holds emergency numbers, substitute caretaker instructions, a membership roster, locker and canoe rack assignments, Club rules and by-laws, and various other official Club information. In the same place is the Island's log book, in which Sunday caretakers are encouraged to write whimsical comments about their day, or make any official log entry regarding incidents on their shift of duty that the Club should know about.

Fri 12 May Yesterday Jim Drew was sitting in a canoe fiddling with some of his fishing gear... his rod propped up vertically and his lure dangling about a foot out of the water... when a large small mouth bass jumped out of the water and took the lure. Took the lure and might have carried off with the rod had not some quick reactions grabbed hold. So to those of you who wonder if they are biting down here... one might say they are downright desperate to get caught.

Sat 13 May Yesterday afternoon Members near the swimming area were treated to the sight of a black snake crawling up the large tree there and entering a small hole about 15 feet up. A starling attacked the snake as best it could, but the snake ignored it and the starling gave up after a while. Moments later a second and even larger black snake (8 feet long... surely our own "Blackie") also crawled up the tree and into the hole. Perhaps some commented, we were witnessing the prelude to a romantic Friday evening dinner of egg a la starling. And indeed it must have been a romantic dinner, because about a hour later both snakes emerged and began mating... there was no question their behaviour could have been anything else! They engaged in a continuous intertwining dance... often while hanging down along the trunk of the tree... usually while only Blackie kept his tail tightly curled around a branch... much like an inverted caduceus... and in fact it is now clear this medical symbol could represent nothing else than the mating of "the serpent." After a while it seemed as though their bodies were glistening with a moistness, and it was easy to suppose that one purpose of the constant writhing was to make sure this moisture was rubbed over every bodily surface so that some of it would get to the one

place it was supposed to go. Often their bodies looked like a braided rope, but the movement was constant... their heads often only inches apart... and it was easy to imagine an affection from the gentle way they moved with and against each other. They kept at it for almost two hours and were still going at dark. It was a grand show, and many families and children were thrilled and educated. This morning Blackie's body could be seen in the hole of the tree and also the head of the female just looking out.

Wed 10 May Both charcoal grills were ready to cook shortly after 7 PM despite the dramatic squall line that swept through an hour before. The weather cleared beautifully and as many hardy and interesting folks showed up with things to cook, the evening before the meeting became one of good food... good frolic... and good fellowship. Henceforth the grills will be ready before all monthly meetings at the Island in the hope of re-creating this spirit of fun. My thanks and appreciation to those of you who did not come to the meeting last night... the Caretaker's Wife provided brownies and the Judson/Esch family provided smores (yes, that's right, smores!!)... so your not attending meant more for me!

Larry Leasener, Chief of Special Projects, Fisheries Service, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, presented a slide show and spoke regarding the fish ladder downstream of the Island and the fish restoration of shad, herring, sturgeon, and other species in the Potomac River as part of a larger restoration effort for the Chesapeake Bay. It was a great show and it is intended that future meetings will also incorporate educational and entertaining evenings.

Thu 18 May The song birds seem particularly loud today, but surely this is a day to sing for. We have noticed that the great flocks of cormorants have moved on... about two weeks ago it now seems... and there is left only a flock of around thirty. I remember once earlier this year during high water a bunch jumped on a small drifting log... reminded me of some poem about cockle shells... and the cormorants came sailing by very close to where we were sitting at the head of the Island on their log boat like a vision from Alice in Wonderland. It was as close to a cormorant out of the water as we have ever been, and while they are beauti-

Notes from the Island

ful birds there is something about the aspect of cormorants that makes it seem as though they are leering... almost buzzard like... especially from a distance when gangs of them hang out in the trees at the foot of Ruppert's Island in that section designated by the Caretaker's Wife as the Hotel Cormorant.

Sat 20 May There have been deer tracks on the Island for the last several days. Day before yesterday while I was mowing the up Island paths and had stopped the mower and moved ahead to clear fallen tree debris, I startled a large deer that leaped out of the foliage only a few feet away. Let me tell you... scared the dickens out of me... that large body moving so suddenly... so near! Just another lesson about how we are surrounded by a world we do not see and are not aware of because we are of our world but not in it like the rest of Nature's children... essentially sharing the same planet but living in different worlds. How often we stride noisily through Nature absorbed only in our thoughts or with our voices, oblivious to the larger world around us... paying attention only to ourselves instead of the beauty of God's world around us. How often does Nature sing to us through Her songbirds... and we, Her most favored children... how seldom we listen or notice.

Mon 22 May Down here it was a black day... filled with dark humors and un-Christian vocabulary... but if you had seen it on your TV it would have been giggles from beginning to end. It started when the smoke alarms went off in the early morning. Please note the plural... because at the prompting of the fire marshall's recommendation two years ago and by the wisdom of the Club Fathers a new, loud, hardwired, redundant, loud, efficient, loud system of 6 smoke detectors was installed professionally. Did I mention loud... as in designed to raise the Caretaker and his Wife from perdition if necessary? And not just one... because they are designed so that when one goes off... they all go off... I can assure you there is nowhere to hide.

Well, you all know the drill from your own homes... race around with nose to air... did I mention how loud... and when a wild eyed investigation shows no smoke... cut the power. So up to the circuit breaker box to flip the switch in the hope that only the one

unit triggered would continue to sound... loudly. No luck! Such clever design. Even on batteries they all sound... loudly... when one sounds. Now we are dragging ladders around (did you ever appreciate how high some of our ceilings are... I assure you we did not... and do not now) trying to identify the failed unit hoping this is not the routine one must follow every time one of the suckers has a low battery, and the first failure we come up against was human failure. By human failure I mean the failure to have paid proper attention when the little beasties were installed. Did I mention professionally installed and hardwired? And loud? So you can imagine the scene where we are trying to figure how to detach one of the suckers from the wall or at least get the cover off to get at the battery... this is the same scene you have seen in the sci-fi movies where the sirens and klaxons are mind deafening and the starship is going to self destruct in thirty seconds unless you can find the right wire. Believe me it was lucky the first unit was not damaged when I tore it out of the wall and disconnected it... but I didn't care. At least then we could figure out how to do it... although not how to get to the battery. By the second unit I was surely legally insane and wishing for a loaded shotgun to quieten the other four. Did I mention the high ceilings? When unit number three came out the others stopped... but not number three. No amount of brute force could crack the cover to get at the battery... and we would have thrown it in the river if it had been closer... but instead we ran to the warm room and stuffed it under the cushion and ran downstairs... where it could still be heard but barely. Much later, when nerves and hearing had recovered somewhat, the Caretaker's Wife was brave enough to go back upstairs and when she pulled number three from under the cushion it fell on the floor and the battery fell out (She swears this is really what happened.) And what caused the crisis? When unit three came out of the ceiling so did a lot of water from last night's rain... so what you see as a silly story is really a report that the upstairs kitchen roof leaks.

—Doc Taliaferro

*Excerpted from the Caretaker's Log at
sycamoreisland.org*



Bald Eagle sightings along our stretch of the river, though not rare, are always exciting. A couple of years ago we were treated to a magnificent display of aerobatics as one of these Top Guns of the bird world battled an Osprey for the latter's fish upstream from Little Falls Dam. The eagle eventually prevailed, scooping the dropped fish from the water.

— the Editors

Thanks to Sue Super for sharing her drawing.

Ruppert



*Ruppert is careless with children,
Islanders watch 'em.*

Cartoon by Johnna Robinson

Found

A set of six keys has been left at the Island... 3 small and 3 large... leather attachment says "Mexico." Contact Doc.

Sunday Relief Caretakers

Date	Time	Name(s)	Telephone
June 4	9:00 - 3:00 3:00 - Dusk	David Lyles Ann and Ted Zahn	703 536-8692 301 656-9749
June 11	9:00 - 3:00 3:00 - Dusk	Lyle Blanchard Susan and John Membrino	202 364-9579 301 229-1154
June 18	9:00 - 3:00 3:00 - Dusk	Susan and Wayne Limberg Dick and Pat Roth	703 533-8639 202 686-0270
June 25	9:00 - 3:00 3:00 - Dusk	Kathy and Bruce Gaber Beth and Mike Grant	301-654-7479 202-234-7547

***** Caretaker Volunteers *****

Call John Krasny (301-564-0342) or Jeff Komarow (301-897-5996) to volunteer for caretaking in July or August. You can also contact them by e-mail at jfkrasny@erols.com or jeffkomarow@aol.com Volunteers from the waiting list are encouraged. It's a great way to spend time on the Island!

Large Parties

Date	Time	Who	What
Jun-09	1530 to 1930	Margaret Barry	Grade 4 school children
Jun-16	1200 to 1800	Brian Waidman	Graduation Party
Jun-17	1300 to 1800	Sue Super	Family Picnic
Jun-23	1000 to 1600	Bruce Gaber	Office Retreat
Jun-25	1400 to 2000	Norman Metzger	15 folks for play reading
Jul-09	1530 to 1900	Peter Fuchs	Work colleagues and families

**A large party application form may be printed from the club's Web page at
<http://www.sycamoreisland.org/systems.htm>**

— or —

**To request a form through the mail, call the Supervisor of Parties,
Bill Eichbaum , 301-229-1713**



The Sycamore Islander

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Bethesda MD 20816-1158

<http://www.sycamoreisland.org>

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June 2000

This Issue:

- New members voted in.
- Take-out for take down.
- *“lure dangling about a foot out of the water... when...”* Fish stories never cease.
- Doc’s *alarming* tale.



What are you doing on my dock?

At this time of year the geese have established themselves as Islanders. In June, these always hungry “members” appreciate a shake of the mulberry limbs near the clubhouse.