

The Sycamore Islander

December, 2001

Volume 80 No. 12

Christmas Day Ferry Operation

On December 25, the ferry will be locked at the canal-side landing. As usual in such circumstances, if you unlock the ferry to visit the Island you are duty bound to answer the call for other members who wish to cross. And, as always, you may pass this duty to other willing members.

December Meeting

This year's annual meeting of our membership will be held at Peggy Thompson's home at 23 Grafton Street in Chevy Chase, Wednesday, December 12th, at 8:00 p.m.

The November meeting took action on the series of motions published in the November issue of the Islander. The motion to increase dues by 10% (to keep up with the inflation curve in the near term) was approved with an amendment applying the increase to all fees as well. The motion introduced by Ann Marie Cunningham to amend the Standing Rules to facilitate changes in dues and fees was passed (see Motion 5 & explanation of the motion in the November *Islander*). Motion 1 (under the Waiting List heading) closing the waiting list during 2002 was passed with an amendment permitting members' children of any age to apply in January. The meeting agreed that our caretaker would not operate the Island ferry on Christmas day (see the Minutes and the above notice).

The December meeting will have three main tasks to

perform: electing the Club officers, approving next year's budget, and determining caretaker compensation for the coming year.

November 2001 Minutes

Attendance: George Malusky, Frances Short, George Loeb, John Matthews, Roger Herst, Judith Bader, Sherrie Pettie (waiting list), Al Brown, Bill Bays, John Lentz, George I. Malusky, Brad Coolidge, Tryon Wells, Pat Barry, Jim Drew, David Winer, Renee Dunham, Jeffrey Komarow, Ann Marie Cunningham, Pat Roth, Susanna Membrino, Carl Linden, Alan Gelb.

Communications: Anne Marie Cunningham read an e-mail letter from Gordon Phillips (Waiting List) which he requested be read at this meeting. He addressed the concern of families with children having to wait so many years for membership that their children would be grown and possibly out of the house. His suggestions: (1) increase the number of members, and (2) issue a limited number of weekend passes. Ann Marie responded to Mr. Phillips' letter by e-mail.

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. **Note to submitters of announcements, articles, or letters: The deadline for inclusion in the January issue is receipt at the Editors' address on Dec. 28. Earlier submissions receive priority.**

November minutes (continueu)

Special Notice: The caretaker has requested that the Island be closed on Christmas. The membership agreed that instead of closing the Island, the Caretaker will be off duty. The ferry will be moored on the towpath shore for any member to use. Members are reminded that, when the ferry is moored and a member takes it to the Island, the member becomes the *de facto* Relief Caretaker and is responsible for ferry operations.

Treasurer's Report: Alan Gelb reported that the budget is "on track." Next year, some budget items will increase (e.g. utilities and insurance) and some decrease (electricity due to PEPCO rebates), rendering the budget about the same with some categories reallocated. Construction costs for the caretaker's quarters are as yet uncertain.

Financial Secretary: The Club requires that the books be checked annually. Johnna Robinson reported all in good order. She noted that the budget has increased 10% over the last four years. Addressing her comments to the motions made last month to increase membership, she noted that even if we increased membership by 20 to 25, revenue would increase only 12% from dues, which is insufficient to offset inflated costs. Increasing membership and increasing dues would each have different effects on Club income. Johnna recommended that these effects be examined.

Tryon Wells commented that he is looking into the possibility of members paying dues over the Web.

Old business: Members turned to the business of discussing the motions introduced in the October meeting. These motions pertained to Club revenue and to the long Waiting List. Since revenue and membership are intertwined issues, the sorting out engaged nearly all in challenging discussion.

Motion 1: (Gerald Barton)

Resolved that total membership be increased by 20 members. *Amendment:* (Ann Marie Cunningham)

Resolved that a committee be formed to examine membership and waiting list issues and present a report and recommendation not later than June 2002. The motion with amendment was defeated.

Motion 2: (Gerald Barton) Resolved that total membership dues be increased by 10%. Amendment: (Jeff Komarow) Resolved that the dues AND fees for year 2002 be increased by 10% rounded up to the nearest whole dollar. The motion to amend was passed. The amended motion likewise was passed with a clear majority.

Motion 3: (Terry Murphy) Resolved that total member-

ship be increased by 25 members. The motion was defeated by a wide margin.

Motion 4: (Caroline Gelb) Resolved that there be an increase of 20% in dues and fees for the year 2002. *Amendment:* (Jeff Komarow) Resolved that there be an increase of 20% in dues and fees for the year 2002, in lieu of the 10% increase in dues and fees (subject to rounding) passed by the approval of Motion 2 as amended.

A motion to amend Motion 4 to eliminate any inconsistency with Motion 2 was passed. However, the amended motion was defeated, **resulting in approval of a 10% increase in dues and fees (subject to rounding)**.

Motion 5: (Ann Marie Cunningham) Resolved that the Standing Rules be amended in order to facilitate changes in dues and fees. Motion 5 was passed unanimously.

Next, Jeff Komarow's motions regarding the closing of the Waiting List were discussed. Jeff's commented that there are now 200 people on the Waiting List, making the waiting period for membership around 14 years. He asked, "When is it unconscionable to require this long a wait?" and observed that, with a large waiting list, there will be an increased number of applicants who may receive passes after the three year wait for passes is satisfied.

Motion 1: Resolved that the Waiting List shall not be opened for new applicants in 2002 except that applications by children 21 years and over of regular or senior members shall be accepted during the month of January.

or

Motion 2: Resolved that Waiting List Applicants beginning in 2002 and thereafter shall not be issued Waiting List Passes except upon approval of the membership assembled in regular meeting after considering the number of Waiting List Passes issued to pre-2002 Applicants and the impact of additional use of the Island.

Motion 1 was selected for voting consideration. Amendment: (Ann Marie Cunningham) Resolved that "21 years and over" be struck from the wording. Motion 1 with amendment was passed. As a consequence, the Waiting List will not be opened for new applications in January 2002, except that applications will be accepted from children of members, regardless of the age of the child.

Motion 2 was withdrawn. The meeting was adjourned with a reminder to all come out to the Workfest on November 17.

- Renee Dunham, Recording Secre-

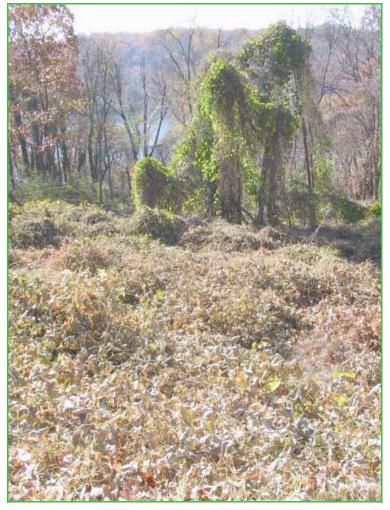
KUDZU ROUNDUP

The battle to "save the big trees" from encroaching vines which Sycamore Islanders have spearheaded suddenly jumped to an all-out attack late in October. The change came when Island Captain John Matthews found a professional spray rig from Cabin John that could, at a surprisingly reasonable cost, begin killing all the kudzu growths in the two selected target areas along MacArthur Boulevard instead of volunteers hand spraying only the growths that were again threatening trees on the edges year after year. The result was that, after some quick consultations, John and I hired the rig and bought more Roundup herbicide to begin wiping out the basic causes, the half acre sized mats of vines,

rather than merely holding the lines at the sides.

Another factor in addition to its much greater cost effectiveness that prompted the shift to mechanization was the difficulty of finding volunteers who could work at short notice when weather conditions permitted. Sally Strain and Dick Doolittle had by then completed the cutting of access paths through thick tangles on which the quartette of ladies mentioned in last month's Islander had made a big start. Incidentally, they also attracted the polite inquiries of not one but two Park Police cars.

But mobilizing volunteers for the subsequent hand spraying had proved so difficult that I had to press two of my relatives into The pickup truck rig came on two fine afternoons well before any frost and applied some 110 gallons of the prescribed mix. The results showed up soon, with big areas of brown prevailing in what had been verdant green. Experience elsewhere indicates that the first round of Roundup will not produce a complete kill, kudzu is so tough and deeply rooted. Two or three more limited applications will probably be needed before plantings of new non-invasive covers can begin. The hope is that the County or the U.S. Corps of Engineers can be induced before then to take on some responsibilities, once the feasibility and the public interest in saving the trees has been demonstrated



Out-of-pocket costs for all operations thus far came to \$165 for the rig and about \$300 for the Roundup concentrate. The Club's Treasurer has been authorized to contribute \$100 toward the latter. John and I are prepared to bear the remainders, with one proviso – that we not be expected to take on the leadership roles again next spring.

Those who helped get the project started can feel gratified at the results, which far exceed initial expectations. Looking ahead, the main tasks for 2002 would seem to be first, to pass the hat among interested individuals and organizations for another, and presumably smaller round of spraying, and second, to cut sizable numbers of

It works! Foreground kudzu is dying ; unsprayed vines are alive in back.

service. They were able in one morning to apply the prescribed mix some 20 feet upwards on four of the six fronts of tree climbing vines. This time, two County Police cars stopped because of 911 calls about suspicious goings on next to Washington's main water supply conduit.

English Ivy vines in the same vicinity where they start crawling up trunks to overpower trees from the inside.

So keep your enthusiasm and your tools sharp.

—Phil Thorson



Visitors to the Island will notice all kinds of improvements. David Holdridge contributed the new glass paned door to the Men's Locker Room, helped by Tryon Wells and others in removing and replacing. The door now closes nicely and provides enough light to get canoeing gear together. Greg Super completed a section of the brick walkway behind the Clubhouse. Kent Halstead and George Malusky hung the old caretaker kitchen cabinets in the screen porch, and George then did extensive brickwork beneath them. Low water allowed the bottom step on the towpath landing to be replaced by John Matthews, Bill Hill, Joe Cecil, and John Membrino. Bill Eichbaum rebricked the small landing where the wooden walkway meets the stairs to the Clubhouse... not so visible a repair but one of the best safety improvements of the Workfest. Carl Linden straightened out the area beneath the workshop, which he reports consisted mostly of wood pieces left over from past and ongoing construction projects on the Island. Roger Herst cleaned the gutters and the leaves from the top of the canoe shed... and caused many comments to be made about his daring-do as he frolicked on the roof like a mountain goat. Jim Drew and Robert Gelb pulled the ferry for long shifts. Tove Elfstrom took on the yearly bane-of-his-existence screen repair, ably assisted this year by Pat Barry and Phil Ross, among others.

Grounds Supervisor Trip Reid had a lengthy list of tasks, and many folks seemed to disappear in his direction. These folks planted, staked, marked, and wrapped many sycamore trees in chicken wire to protect them from beaver depredation. They also attacked kudzu and English ivy. Fran Short volunteered early on to organize the sprucing-up effort upstairs... and there were several times that it seemed half the people on the Island had disappeared... certainly there were unsung multitudes laboring upstairs and on the grounds... the results were to be clearly seen. George and Marcia Loeb organized the feeding of the masses with their usual flair and élan that we have all come to take for granted... and so all found their reward in this life in both good food and fellowship.

Fall Workfest November 10

Seventy-three people signed in for the Workfest. This year five people signed in as guests. The ferry log enabled us to keep track of those who have contributed to Club activities to qualify for certain privileges... such as having large parties.



These pictures from the Workfest and more, in color, are on the Club's website at: http://www.sycamoreisland.org/sypict.htm



As usual, many people brought their own rakes... as if to declare up-front their activity of choice and avoid being drafted into other projects. Caretaker-Doc observed: "Entirely too much laughter and enjoyment seems to be coming from the many yard rakers... and what is going on there should be investigated. Where have gone those days when the sweaty, grunting few would show up and do all the heavy work... the noble bonding of the struggling and intrepid handful that alone did everything for everyone? This party atmosphere flies in the face of tradition... it is unseemly... Members are having entirely too much fun at these Workfests!"



Before...

During...

During...

After.

Classified Ad

P&H Orion single Greenland style fiberglass kayak. 18 feet long, 22 inches wide with lots of volume. White with black trim.

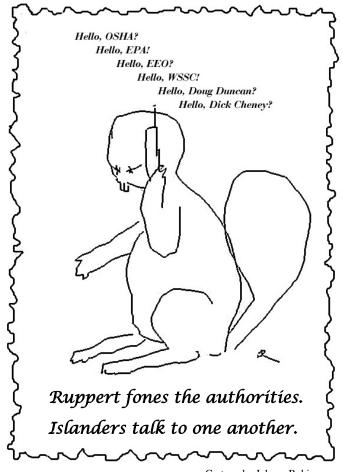
Large enough for stability even with a heavy kayaker, good tracking with an adjustable skeg, and volume for expeditions and camping trips.

10 years old in superb condition (new over \$3,000) with Kevlar paddles, skirt, deckbag, bilgepump, safety paddle and float. Price: \$1,500.

Will deliver in 100 mile radius from Arlington VA. Call Arthur B. Roggeband: (703) 465-2077 or (703) 875-3324.



Ruppert



Cartoon by Johnna Robinson

Canal through-hiker stops by the Club.

— by David Winer

I was busy taking a picture of the Potomac (the photograph used as the masthead in the November issue of the *Islander*), when a hiker along the path asked me to take one of him with his camera. I learned that he was starting out on one of those epic journeys that hardy folks attempt: walking the entire canal from Georgetown to Cumberland. This struck me as dubious at the time—this fellow had minimal gear, and appeared illequipped to face the 200 miles and cold nights ahead of him.



Hilton Osborne takes a snapshot break along the C&O Towpath on a fine October morning. "Broadwater," between Sycamore Island and the Virginia shore, is in the background.

I invited Hilton Osborne to take a break with me on the Island, offering him the opportunity to visit a scene that he would otherwise not discover. We sat on the deck, talking of a number of things, especially about hiking. He had flown in from Fresno, California just to make this walk. After seeing him off, Doc and I speculated about his chances of reaching his goal.

Recently I had the following e-mail message from Hilton:

Dave:

Thanks for the tea. I made it to Cumberland from Georgetown in 11 days with a lay bath day in Hancock. Enjoyed the history of the canal and the important part the river played on the growth of our great country.

Orientation on November 3

The Orientation was a credit to the Club. There were over 70 people on the Island, most of them Wait Listers. Presentations were made by Jeff Komorow,

Tryon Wells, Tove Elfstrom, Blair Bower, David Winer, and the Caretaker. After introductions by Jeff, Tove spoke about the specialness of the Island... Tryon about the history... Blair about the tradition of Co-op... David about canoeing and swimming safety... and the Caretaker about rules and the

unique practicalities of coming to and being on the Island. The attendees were then treated to lunch prepared

by George and Marcia Loeb... with some potlucks thrown in. If the attendees were as illuminated about their responsibilities as prospective members as they seemed to be entertained by the event... it was a raging success, and Jeff and his committee deserve a special thanks.





Notes from the Island

Thu 1 Nov November temps in the mid 70s... is this what we call Indian summer??? There is not much use in writing a log entry today... as surely anyone with time to peruse the Log will not waste time thusly when the same time could more wisely be spent getting down here. There are fishermen out today who are hoping the swimming fauna will be frenzied in their effort to fatten up for winter... but still everyone laments that this has been the worst fishing season in memory.

Tue 6 Nov It is no fun to walk the Island at night now... not because of the cool... but because of the dead leaves. The leaves have removed any illusion of stealth from the dark Caretaker walks... not that he is still silly enough to think that any nonhuman neighbor on the Island can be approached and watched in secret... but critters at either end of the Island can surely tell when he steps off of the swept wooden walkway. This works also for critters, as the voles and geckos can go nowhere without making lots of rustling and scurrying sounds... but the cats cannot approach anything sneakily. Another disappointment to report is the appearance of new outdoor lights across the river where one of the homes on Crest Lane has lit up their grounds. The feeling of encroachment is palpable... as when these lights are on a largish area is lit up almost directly across the river where the house itself is hidden and it definitely brings the city to the river gorge.

Fri 9 Nov Visitors are warned that coming to the Island they will now find the Club canoes locked up. Members will recall that after a canoeing accident this last winter dumped a Member into frigid water, the Club changed the rules regarding the use of Club canoes such that they cannot be used when the water temperature falls below 55 degrees or the river level rises above 5 feet at the Little Falls Gauge. This does not affect the use of privately owned canoes.

Mon 12 Nov Jim Snow was down this morning to retrieve the cane seats from his canoe for repair. He is in possession of a rare resource... knowledge of someone who can do such work... no doubt another of those disappearing craft skills. Those of you with cane seats in your canoes should take note.

Tue 13 Nov During a presentation of the history of the Club during Saturday's orientation, Tryon Wells let drop several tantalizing tidbits not generally known. For instance... when women were allowed to have membership in 1914, one third of the then male Membership at the time resigned from the Club. There was a further backlash towards female Membership in 1922... when, because of an issue to do with locker availability ... a quota limit was imposed. There was a lot going on that year, as Membership was increased from 35 to 100... and this was also the year that alcohol was banned on the Island. Wouldn't it be wonderful to know the interplay of all these influences... the relationship between women, increased numbers, and alcohol? Tryon prepared a Club History timeline sheet as a handout, and this will be displayed on the bulletin board in the Clubhouse.

Fri 16 Nov It was a bleary staff awakening this morning. Night before last we had been jolted upright in bed by the frantic activity of two cats skittering and scrambling across our bodies... seemingly in pursuit of some critter. One can imagine the reaction of the Caretaker's Wife as realization set in that some "thing" had been chased across the top of our bedcovers... and so now in the early a.m. everyone was looking for the pursued... to no avail. Well, with all that activity and adrenalin it was a while before sleep came again. But it did not last long. Gazing up from the Caretaker's side of the bed one looks into a weird ceiling corner... with exposed pipes and steel beams and valves... and next to the bed a tall but narrow book shelf sticks up into that space. Barney, our very large, shy, massive, white, very heavy, seldom seen, very weighty, Czech kitty can creep into bed without incident, but when he "bounds" into bed it is an earthquake drill... and again and again the lights came on to see what the fuss was about. Most worrisome... Barney kept trying to jump from the backboard of the bed to the top of the bookcase... and as he did not always make it there some amount of yowling and bouncing and matressing as trampoline and such. Worst of all was when he would decide to jump down from bookcase to bed, and the bed would shake as if beneath a B-52 attack. Accordingly, the Caretaker was in ill humor at being awakened every ten minutes at all this... and the vocabulary was certainly exercised towards the

hapless Barney... because despite constant rising and searching, no interloper could be found. It actually took a while before the Caretaker caught on that the Caretaker's Wife was unable to get back to sleep... I mean really... just because some strange, unidentified, wild creature had run across her sleeping body and was thought by the cats to be hiding in the ceiling recesses above her bed.

Well... you can be sure there were cranky humans the next morning... without any kind words for feline crew. And, when mid-morning mayhem erupted again as cats came scrambling and scurrying and chasing something into the living room... knocking over anything in the way... it was a relief to see that it was a Carolina wren loose in the quarters... soon captured and released. Of course, the Caretaker's Wife was mollified that the mystery was solved and that the previous evening's intruder was identified as such a harmless critter... and a good night's sleep was looked forward to.

But it was not to be. Again, last night, the process began to be repeated, as groggy humans awakened to frenzied cats. There was a definite adrenalin spike as looking up above the bed... a strange tail could be seen hanging amongst the pipes. At first it was reminiscent of a horror movie where the monster keeps coming back... but in fact it was merely just a very juvenile squirrel that had gotten in, or been brought in as a plaything. Eventually... it was a long night... the squirrel was coaxed into a shoebox, taken outside, and released... and the Caretaker's Wife finally slept.

Mon 19 Nov It is not possible to walk into the men's locker room and not notice the change... the new back door with the glass panes. Donated by David Holdridge, the new door gives an airy and lighted feel to the room even when shut. The previous door was always open as a way to get light into that part of the room in order to see and obtain the life vests for canoeing. This allowed wind and weather to always be in this part of the building. Today we actually had mosquitoes in the screen porch, and any folks that have asked why the screen door is never closed have learned that it is because it was always futile because with the back door always open there were always mosquitoes lurking in the locker room. With light coming in the new door, the downstairs area will

now likely stay closed and somewhat sealed against mosquitoes (and coons, possums, and other neighbors).

Wed 21 Nov The endless summer is gone... last night it froze on the Island... and that is why yesterday the water was turned off in the Clubhouse ... so visitors take note: You must bring your own drinking water and know where the heated bathroom is in the Men's Locker Room. To Members, the Spring and Fall Workfests are the transition between high and low season down here... but nothing is quite as serious a demarcation as turning off the water and draining the pipes. The habitable portion of the Island is thus limited to the Caretaker's quarters... and on cold days the next warm space is reached only by crossing a cold river and climbing a cold hill. The exception to this is the small, newly (as in last year) constructed warm room upstairs adjacent to the Clubroom. Members should know that they can still experience beautiful river and Island panorama and still have a warm refuge.

Fri 30 Nov If this is really the last day of November... why were there joggers in shorts and short sleeves on the towpath this morning? Well... one reason is that down here it was 60 degrees at 0900 hrs. and 70 degrees at 1200 hrs. How long can this warm good weather continue? But do not worry... take comfort that our government has reassured us that the planet is not getting warmer.

Disappointed fishermen may like to know that Marianne Ross has a son that runs a rockfish farm nearby, and those too embarrassed to return home empty-handed can obtain fresh pound-and-half fish. Of course, there may be clever gourmets out there also interested in this resource. Call Marianne at 301-229-6690 for more information.

We regret that it is necessary to remind Members that it is bad manners to enter the Caretaker's quarters when Caretaker and Wife are off the Island... or at any time... without express permission.

> Excerpted from the Caretaker's Log at: www.sycamoreisland.org

MONTGOMERY SYCAMORE ISLAND CLUB NOMINATIONS FOR OFFICERS AND SUPERVISORS 2002

OFFICERS

President **	Carl Linden	301-229-2398
Vice-President	Anne-Marie Cunningham	703-876-9165
Recording Secretary		
Treasurer **	Alan & Caroline Gelb	301-229-5969
Financial Secretary	Lisa Kliefoth	301-229-2158
Membership Secretary	Jeff Komarow	301-897-5996
Editor	David & Jane Winer	301-229-8963
Archivist	Holly Syrrakos	301-891-4940
Captain **	John Matthews	301-229-0234
Deputy Captain * **	John Stapko	301-953-1949

SUPERVISORS

Finance **	Bill Eichbaum	301-229-1713
Law * **	Maurice Tobin	202-232-0220
Clubhouse	Karl Kosok	301-589-0034
Grounds *	Anna Sofaer	202-966-0352
Painting/Carpentry	Charles Pill	703-524-8254
Website	Tryon Wells	301-320-6762
Entertainment	George & Marcia Loeb	301-652-4229
Camping/Parties	John Noble	301-320-4216
Canoeing *	Jim Drew	202-462-3836
Swimming *	Tove Elfstrom	703-533-5537
Relief Caretaking	Bill & Lucky Marmon	301-654-7893

CARETAKER

7023 MacArthur Boulevard Bethesda, MD 20816

301-229-4921

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jessie Bakeman Blair Bower Warren Brown Betty Burchell Bradford Coolidge **Richard Doolittle**

Doc Taliaferro

Bill Eichbaum **Richard Fellows** William Kugler George Loeb David Lyles George Malusky

John Michener Clifford Russell Jack Sanders John Schubert Tryon Wells

STANDING COMMITTEES

* = Safety Committee

** = Personnel Committee

Sunday Relief Caretakers

December 2001

Date	Time	Name(s)	Telephone
Dec 2	11:00 - Dusk	John Membrino	301-229-1154
Dec 9	11:00 - Dusk	Tom Hylden	301-951-4156
Dec 16	11:00 - Dusk	Tom & Elizabeth Gibbon	703-243-9620
Dec 23	11:00 - Dusk	Johnna Robinson	301-229-5421
Dec 30	11:00 - Dusk	Volunteer needed!	
Volun	E It'	 ** Caretaker Volunteers *** l Patricia & Terry Murphy (301)-263-9766 or Brian & Anne Waidmann (703-536-3168) to volunteer for caretaking . s a great way to spend time on the Island! <i>ag list are encouraged. Don't forget: Relief C</i> 	Caretakers sign in too!

Large Parties No Large Parties have been reported for December 2001

A large party application form may be printed from the club's Web page at http://www.sycamoreisland.org/systeps.htm — or —

To request a form through the mail, call the Supervisor of Parties, John Noble e-mail: jnoble@erols.com, phone: 301-320-3554, fax: 301-320-4216

Waiting List Fees Waiting List Fee 22 Waiting List Pass * 132
Waiting List Fee 22
Waiting List Pass * 132
Party Fees
1 to 20 Guests 11
1 Guests to the 35 maximum 28



The Sycamore Islander

6006 Welborn Drive Bethesda MD 20816-1158

http://www.sycamoreisland.org

To view this month's Sycamore Islander on the Internet, go to: http://www.sycamoreisland.org/carpet/islander.htm First-class Mail U.S. Postage Paid Bethesda, MD 20817 **Permit No. 1172**

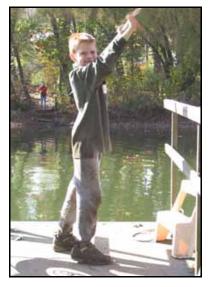
FIRST CLASS MAIL

FIRST CLASS MAIL

December 2001

This Issue:

- Dues and fees are going up, folks.
- Waiting List closed for 2002.
- Kudzu kill.
- Doc sees Workfest as "Funfest," harrumphs.
- Orientation orations.
- Ruppert snitches.



Scott Berteau on duty at the ferry during the October Orientation. Definitely a stretch. —Photo by Dave Winer