



The Sycamore Islander

May, 2002

Volume 81 No. 5

May Meeting

The May meeting of the Club will be on Wednesday, May 8th at 8:00 p.m. on the island.

Our April meeting was held in the Clubhouse. The main action taken at the meeting was the decision to renovate and overhaul the Club well to assure that it provides and will continue to provide us with quality drinking water.

L. Franklin Easterday's WELL & PUMP, INC. will be engaged to do the needed work that will bring the well and its operation to the highest standards. Mr. Easterday examined our well and water purification system in a visit to the Island and outlined what needs to be done in his proposal sent to the Club in his letter of March 25th. The decision to go ahead with the proposed work was taken after Pat Barry, Chair of the Water Committee established at the March meeting, made a detailed and fine presentation on the well system and the work that needs to be done. Pat illustrated and clarified the points he made with architectural drawings he had prepared for examination by the meeting's members. Pat, who is an architect by profession, is well-qualified to head the water committee and the expertise he brings to the subject is highly appreciated.

(For further details on the meeting see the minutes below)

The meeting approved and warmly welcomed two new members, Harvey and Dorothy Resnick. Harvey and Dorothy also participated in the meeting's deliberations.

The meeting was adjourned at 10 p.m. —Carl Linden, President

Minutes of the April 10, 2002 Meeting

Attendance: George Malusky II, Brad Coolidge, John Matthews, Peggy Thomson, Jane Winer, Jeff Komarow, Carl Linden, Jim Drew, Renee Dunham, George Loeb, David Winer, Mark Schlefer, Dorothy Fall, Harvey Resnik, Pat Barry, John Noble, Larry Heilman, Bill Bays, Pat Roth, and Ann Marie Cunningham.

The meeting was called to order by President Carl Linden. Several people reported being surprised to read in the minutes that they were on the Water Committee, or chaired it, but all willing accepted their new post.

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 June issue is receipt at the Editors' address on May 30. Earlier submissions receive priority.**

April Minutes (continued)

Communications: A note was received from Tom Gutnick reporting that his father had passed on February 10, and that on Saturday, April 6, the family gathered at Sycamore Island to scatter his ashes in the river. Tom expressed his gratefulness for the happiness that Sycamore Island had given his parents, Art and Arline, during their lives.

Star Mitchell reported that the CCA Whitewater Canoe race is tentatively scheduled for June 15. The Island will again mark the end of the race, and the Sycamore Island Club will provide some refreshments. George Loeb will help.

Treasurer: Alan Gelb reported (via email) that “normal” expenses are as expected. The insurance costs have increased about 16%. Construction related expenses are: initial design (~\$1400), preliminary work on footings and tree felling (~\$900), work on kitchen, including dishwasher and range (~\$3,700), advisory & inspection services related to water & sewage (~\$2,200) for a total of \$8,591.46

Membership: Harvey Resnik and Dorothy Fall were accepted into membership. The spring orientation is scheduled for April 14. Shelley Malusky is organizing the lunch. The orientation will be conducted outdoors, walking around the Island. Johnna’s cartoons have been incorporated into the handouts.

Captain: The Deputy Captain John Stapko sawed up a log out back. Karl Kosok bought a new \$900 refrigerator for \$399 because it had a dent that did not affect its function. It should have been installed before these minutes were typed.

Editor: An invitation was extended to all to write short passages about Doc to be included in a future newsletter.

Personnel: After Doc first submitted his resignation, we almost convinced him to stay. However, an

incident involving an unresponsive relief caretaker caused them to reflect upon the many inconveniences and problems over the years. Doc then discussed with the committee many recommendations that would address those problems. Over the next several months, these recommendations will be brought to the meeting for discussion. A straw poll unanimously concurred to giving Doc a gift of a lump sum and extension of benefits similar to what was given to Peter.

A flyer to recruit a new caretaker was circulated, and comments were made. The flyer will be posted in stores and organizations in the area that have a boating or environmental focus, and on the Island web page. Ads will be placed in the Audubon Naturalist, CCA’s Cruiser and similar publications. The membership should spread the word about the vacancy because members have found past caretakers. Tell interested persons to check the web page and then contact Carl Linden.

Larry Heilman will work with Candy Means and Lucky Marmon to review and revise the guidelines for relief caretakers and will report next month.

Suggestions for a gift for Doc and Phyllis were made. Someone is needed to coordinate such a gift.

Water: Pat Barry, despite being surprised to learn of being the chair, did a remarkable job of researching the problem with the well, consulting with the consultant, the building committee, and others, and conducting his own investigation, including putting a camera down the well. He presented architectural drawings of the well, clubhouse and septic system. He concluded that the well was broken and that the Club must fix it as soon as possible, and that there are no other options. Easterday’s proposal to pull out the pump, silt and gravel by hand (since the proper equipment can’t be moved to the Island) then repack, reload, and reseal it for \$8500, and to install a state of the art ultra-violet light that would turn off

Ruppert

April Minutes (continued)

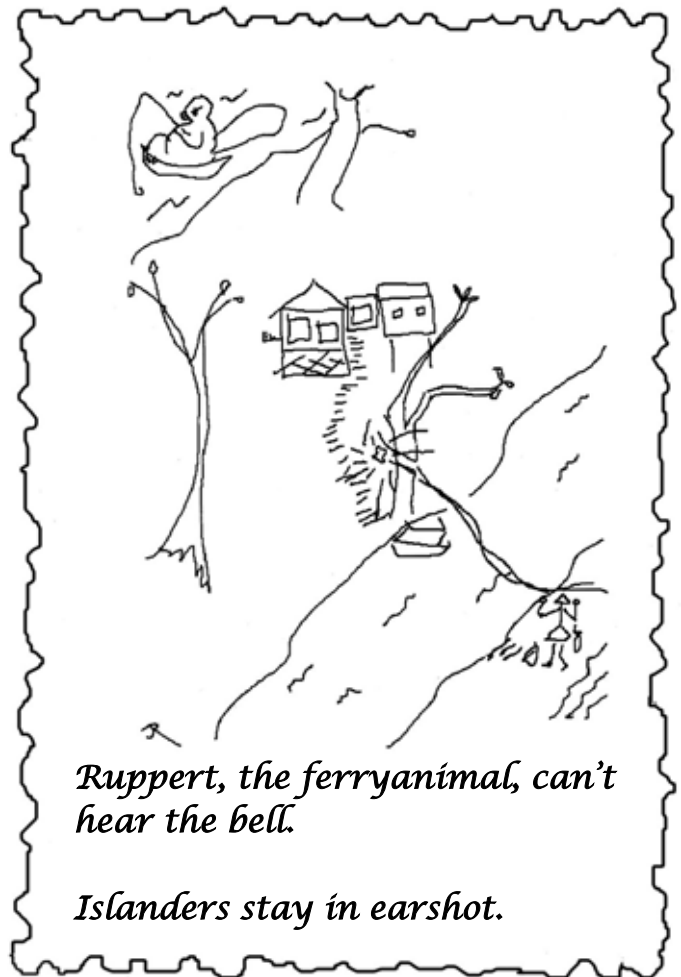
the pump when the light wasn't working for \$1500 was first made three years ago, and again just prior to the last meeting. Quarterly maintenance by a professional is necessary to keep the well in good working order. A motion to contract with Easterday was passed with one dissenting vote.

Bill Bays presented information about two distilleries that could be used after the well is repaired to remove lead, mercury, bug killers, and other chemicals from the drinking water. The Water Committee will look further into these distilleries and other filters.

Inter-Generational Party: The family event will be held on April 20 from 4:00 until sundown. The games have been tested and are hilariously fun.

Other Business: George Loeb received permission to bring a school group to the Island on two different weekdays in June and July. The dates will be posted in the Islander.

— Ann Marie Cunningham, Vice President



Cartoon by Johnna Robinson

Relief Caretaking - a Priority

The issue of Club members' duty to serve as relief caretakers has been put on the front burner. This is due both to the departure of "Doc" as well as to the resistance the relief caretaker schedulers are encountering when they ask some members to do the job on Sundays. New rules regarding relief caretaking will be discussed and voted on at the next meeting, on the Island, on Wednesday, May 8th at 8:00 p.m.

The proposal makes relief caretaking an obligation of membership, except for senior members or members who cannot physically do the job.

Letter from the Building Committee

To: Montgomery Sycamore Island Club

From: Al Brown—For the Caretaker's Quarters Building Committee

The purpose of this memorandum is to give an overview of the work done in the last two years regarding renovation of the Caretakers Quarters.

This report provides a foundation for the next steps the Club might take.

The First Committee:

Captain John Matthews suggested the need to move the Caretakers' Quarters above the flood level. In July 2000 an Ad-Hoc Caretakers Addition Committee under Club President Tryon Wells formulated some goals for the renovation: (1) get the living space above usual flood level; (2) make a living space suitable for a couple (recognizing space requirements for a spouse/partner work-space); (3) make a healthy, attractive and secure quarters; (4) cost not to exceed \$31,000 (later amended by the club to \$50,000). John Wiebenson's architectural plan for a new quarters was reviewed and suggestions made for changes. Present at that meeting were John and Abigail Wiebenson, John Matthews, Alan Gelb, Trip Reid and Mardy Burgess. These goals and minutes of this meeting were reported in the *Islander*. Wells received no response from Wiebenson for making any of the suggested changes. The next meeting was attended by only three members. Wiebenson did not attend and the committee foundered.

The Second Committee:

At a Club meeting in November 2000, an eruption of embarrassment concerning the plight of the Caretakers Quarters brought forth response from President Tryon Wells and a second Caretakers Committee was created. Al Brown offered to chair it; volunteers offering to be on the committee were Karl Kosok, Chuck Pill, Ned Goddard, Richard Bertaut, and Mardy Bur-

gess. Since there had been no response from Wiebenson concerning suggestions made for changes to the original drawings, and because the Committee did not like several aspects of the Weibenson plan, the Committee decided to develop its own plan. Also, Wiebenson's drawings were not complete enough for soliciting bids. Wiebenson subsequently requested payment for his plan, although no official contract, written or verbal, had ever been made. The Club members voted that Wiebenson be paid.

The Committee requested drawings from Club members and Pat Barry (architect), and John Matthews. Neither chose to do it. By January 2001, the committee had contacted architect Lynn Iadarola (Archeus Studio, recommended by Ned Goddard) to make preliminary drawings. Suggestions were made to Lynn to simplify her drawings in accordance with club needs and costs, which she did. The architectural drawings and a three-dimensional scale model (model entirely made by Al Brown) of the renovation were present at club meetings for members to review.

Bids were requested from four builders including John Matthews; Matthews declined to bid. The Committee had found a contractor willing to do the outside shell for a price well within the \$50,000 allocated for the Caretaker's Renovation. It was decided that Club members could do much of the inside finishing (other than electrical and plumbing) to keep within budget.

Problems:

A large maple tree was quite close to the projected caretakers' quarters. John Matthews, Doc and Al Brown measured it at 14' away from the present quarters at ground level; however, the tree bent toward the quarters and was

Letter from the Building Committee (continued)

about 13' away at the roof level. For construction purposes the tree needed to come down and the officers agreed with the committee. Al Brown made arrangements to have it taken down by a person, recommended by Captain John Matthews. It was found that the tree was lopsided and had a large section dangerously close to the clubhouse roof that could have damaged the clubhouse during a windstorm.

The building plans came to a halt when the Caretaker's Quarters Committee was about to sign a contract to renovate the Caretaker's Quarters. Within a few days before signing the contract a "traitor" (a traitor is one who betrays a cause or trust) went to Montgomery County Officials with the lie that the Club was discharging raw sewage into the river, and that the Club was planning new construction. The sewage problem brought an Official from the Health Department to the Island very quickly. The county official thought the septic system seemed OK and did not pursue the matter further.

The need for further analysis of the well and septic system stopped the forward movement of the Caretakers' Quarters renovation.

Where we are today:

We have recognized for the safety of the Club and caretakers that the well and septic system need to be improved. At the March 2002 Sycamore meeting Al Brown made a motion that well-work be carried out by Easterday, one of the few persons qualified to work on our well who had reviewed the well system and whose work was certified by the county. The members rejected this motion and decided to establish a Water Committee to look into various options for the well and water problems; Pat Barry chairs that Committee.

The Club has been doing renovations on its premises as it saw fit since the Club began in 1885. We must recognize, however, that many new government regulations have been added and changed since then. In particular, we must recognize that many new regulations have been put on the books, especially in the last 20 years.

At present, the Quarters have been somewhat improved including new plywood floor of kitchen/bedroom area, effectively sealing out rodents, bugs and spiders. The kitchen has been upgraded with a new range, dishwasher, and counter tops, using kitchen cabinets given to the club. All of these kitchen items are intended for the renovated Caretaker's Quarters when finished.

It is still essential to renovate the Caretaker's Quarters to bring it above normal flood level. How to renovate the Caretakers Quarters after the water problems are resolved is the next decision. However, these current water problems indicate we should put the renovation project temporarily on hold. Al Brown, who will be moving soon, is stepping down as Chair of the Caretaker's Quarters Committee. However, the Committee will continue.



Patience is a goose-mom. She has been brooding her clutch near the screen porch for about two weeks. Doc put up a board barrier to keep passersby away.

Spring 2002 Orientation – a Rousing Success

Braving income tax deadlines and the threat of bad weather, over forty wait-listers and new members showed up for the Spring 2002 orientation conducted by Tryon Wells and Jeff Komarow. The weather gods smiled on the Island, and Tryon and Jeff were able to cover the orientation topics while leading an Island walk. After completing the program, everyone enjoyed a barbecue lunch, which included a delicious array of potluck side dishes and desserts.

The orientation could not have been accomplished without the help of volunteers, including Pat Barry, Ann Marie Cunningham, Ginny Fowler, Sandi Komarow, Paul London, George & Shelley Malusky, Terry Murphy, and David Winer. Special thanks go to George & Shelley (and family) for shopping, setting up, cooking, and helping to clean up. Their willingness to pitch in shows true Islander spirit.

If you're on the waiting list and haven't attended an orientation, the Fall 2002 orientation will be held on Saturday, October 19, 2002. After this year, we will hold only one orientation annually, so don't delay.



Getting underway in the clubhouse. Are these folks attentive or what?



Among the more important topics: using Club canoes.



Officers and Supervisors take turns at explaining how it all works. Website Tsar, Tryon Wells, describes the many facets of the web pages and answers questions.

Scenes from Family Game Night



Family Game Night was my yearning for the kind of snowbound, mid-winter community entertainment described by Laura Ingalls Wilder in her books depicting the life of a Midwestern family in the nineteenth century. Transplanted to a 2002 Potomac island whose plumbing is not crowd-ready until April, this event became an outdoor romp in a field of faded Virginia bluebells near a goose nest guarded by an anxious gander. As to the family part: thanks to Thomas Esch, we actually had a child among us. His young friend, Robbie Rasmussen, joined us later.

Thomas was our instructor for SPUD, a game of run-and-freeze tag played with a beach ball. The beach ball was the only one who didn't argue about the rules. SPUD was followed by Dumb Cranbo, a charades game in which a series of rhyming words were mimed until the right word, selected

secretly by the other team, was acted out. Jane Winer, lying in the bluebells, played both "bed" and "dead." Petra Reidel-Williams (guest), yodeling into a device constructed of a water balloon atop a stick, enacted "mike."

Dinner time. Pizza was balanced by a broccoli salad. An elaborate ice cream cake and homemade chocolate-chip cookies unbalanced it again.

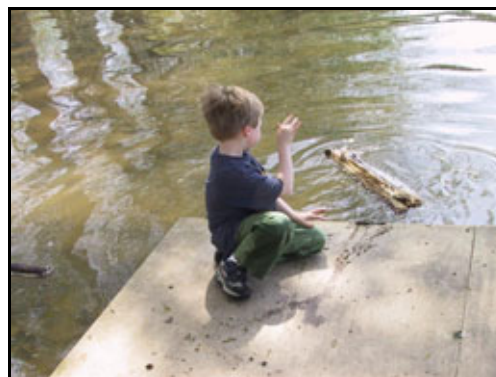
Gray clouds produced rain. We abandoned pleasant conversations, ping pong and headed for the ferry. OK, I know we don't have to have games to enjoy the Island, but it was lovely to have the Island to enjoy the games.

— Renee Dunham



Boys just wanna have fun...

These guys managed to get through the Spring Orientation just fine, thank you.



Doc, Phyllis--Just know when you go to that farm of yours, we'll miss you, we'll think of you. Lots.

We'll remember how--arm over arm at the ferry rope and in your warm welcoming way--you carry us skimming over the Potomac on those Sycamore Clipper trips to the beloved Island. We'll remember how--because so many of us pokeyfolk visit the Island so seldom--you carry the Island to us with your marvelous month-by-month Notes from the Island.

Pick up any Islander, or as I just did, a random six, and the Island's special features of the moment come to me as gifts, all in the skilled light touch of our Doc's telling. Here I catch glimpses of the bluebells at their peak, of violets lining the walkway, multitudes of trout lilies in bloom, blue periwinkle, creeping myrtle. There's the sound of fish jumping, the sight of a flock of seagulls circling the river just up from the fish ladder, news of the goose nest in the rootball near the Captain's float with a broken shell to mark a plunder and to explain the cries heard in the night. I chance onto accounts of ducks cavorting and frolicking and how you, Doc, feel honored of an early evening to sit listening and be allowed to participate in one of the duck Mysteries of life, adding though that by midnight the sounds begin to be a bit much. Over the years you often refer to this privileged Island-guy view of sitting, seemingly alone and then being surprised--as by slender goosenecks rising from the bluebells, looking about and then disappearing.

A "lucky witness" you call yourself, responding to Nature's reminder of our being surrounded by so much we do not see and seldom take the time or have the wit to look. From sublime to goofy, you

treat us to it all. Visits from herons, from crows, and from raccoons rummaging in the metal trash can, from a spiderweb-wise naturalist who teaches you five webs. We're in on your musings over the physics of ferry pulling. And in on those loud nighttime slurps, too, in the kitchen when Petey the possum enters through the cat door and drinks his fill at the dish of Barney and Miss T--only to be so confused over how to exit that it has to be by Caretaker with available cat carrier. You take us to the tunnelings of moles feeding on spring bulbs, the moonlit squabblings of geese, the seasonal comings

and goings of gaggle after gaggle, the courtship of a pair of black snakes hanging upsidedown, caduceus-style, from a branch. Through you we track the traffic at the hanging birdfeeder of finches feeding on thistle and woodpeckers on suet and we hear that authoritative rattle of the pileated at his work.



Seated as we Islanders are, by our home radiators, we pounce on the news updates of a freezing river including the Caretaker's crash and slide through the ice on a February walkover to the towpath to escort Phyllis home from her work.

My question is: Does that lucky farm know the fun it will have from the two of you--Phyllis's famously friendly overnight tenting parties, for example--Come One Come All ! Does that farm know the love it will enjoy and the respectful scrutiny for its revelations of Mysteries? Pennsylvania beavers: Are you ready? Doc the tree protector will be on his way, and he's surely prepared so-to-speak to outfox you!

— Peggy Thomson

A Resident Caretaker

is needed for a Canoe Club
located in the Potomac River. The

Montgomery Sycamore Island Club

is seeking an environmentally sensitive individual to:

- Provide leadership for routine club functions
- Maintain courteous relations with Club and community members
- Operate the ferry to the Island for members
- Perform routine maintenance
- Exclude non-members from premises
- Provide reasonable protection of Club assets and facilities

Desired Qualifications:

- First Aid and CPR
- Whitewater canoeing and boating
- Swimming

Fax inquiries and resume before May 15 to:

202-994-5436

For info about the Club see

www.svcamoreisland.org

Washington Canoe Club to hold auction.

The Washington Canoe Club is having a major fund raising event this spring to support their centennial campaign in preparation for their 100th anniversary in 2004. They will have a Silent Auction on Saturday May 11th from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. Location will be at the Lab School of Washington (4759 Reservoir Road, NW, Washington, DC).

Auction items will include canoes, artwork, certificates to restaurants and other businesses, use of vacation cabin in Luray, stay in a B&B in historic Philadelphia, tickets to an Orioles game.

Admission is \$20 per person for those 15 years of age and older. No admission charge for those 14 and under. Beverages will be available, with appetizers provided by Clyde's Restaurant. There is plenty of parking at and around the Lab School.

Look for auction items on the WCC web site:

www.wcanoe.org

For additional information please contact WCC members Jim Ross (301-229-5789) or Mary Garland (703-243-9627).

Who Owns these Canoes ???

We have two canoes on the island now of unknown ownership. After some investigation, we cannot find any record or person who can give us a clue to the ownership of these two canoes. Occasionally a member resigns or moves away and informally gives their canoe to the Club by simply leaving it behind. That may be what occurred with these two canoes. We are trying to make certain. If you have any information on who might own either of these canoes, please contact canoe supervisor Jim Drew at (202) 462-3836 or jdrewesq@aol.com.

1. Grumman, aluminum, 15 ft., with the name "Bunny II" on the bow. This canoe can be found on rack H-2 and has an H-2 decal on the bow.

2. Grumman, aluminum, 17 ft., painted blotchy yellow on white. Has the name "Candide II" on the bow and "Dr Panglos" on the stern. This canoe is stored in the area with the Club canoes.

This announcement will appear in two issues of the Islander. If owners cannot be identified after a reasonable period of time, these two canoes will be considered as having been abandoned to the Club by their former owners.



Sunday Relief Caretakers May - June 2002

Date	Time	Name(s)	Telephone
May-05	9:00-3:00	Nancy & Winston Wiley	301-299-7586
	3:00-Dark	Fred Wright/Catherine Seibert	301-229-7184
May-12	9:00-3:00	John & Ruth Stapko	301-953-1949
	3:00-Dark	Peter & Julia Smith	703-385-2883
May-19	9:00-3:00	Margaret & Patrick Barry	301-229-5351
	3:00-Dark	John & Jyl Pomeroy	703-243-8256
May-26	9:00-3:00	Eric & Rene Simpson	703-821-7556
	3:00-Dark	Norman & Nancy Metzger	202-546-1034
June 2	9:00 - 3:00	Fran Rothstein/Steve Wolk	301-656-7667
	3:00 - dark	George Malusky	301-871-1707
June 9	9:00 - 3:00	Gail Henry/ Sam Francis	202-965-0314
	3:00 - dark	Morris Cobern	301-563-6435
June 16	9:00 - 3:00	Peter Fuchs	202-362-8348
	3:00 - dark	Star Mitchell	301-350-3252
June 23	9:00 - 3:00	Phyllis Olfky	301-345-2353
	3:00 - dark	Linda & Dick Reigleman	301--229-2871
June 30	9:00 - 3:00	Jerome Cramer	202-966-1544
	3:00 - dark	Richard & Carol Schleicher	301-229-2385

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

To volunteer for Sunday relief caretaking, call **Bill & Lucky Marmon: 301-654-7893** or,
Howard and Candy Means: 301-320-5270. It's a great way to spend time on the Island!
Volunteers from the waiting list are encouraged. Don't forget: Relief Caretakers sign in too!

Large Parties

Date	Time	Who	What
April 26	overnight	Scott Byers	??, Camping
April 30	10 a.m.- 2 p.m.	Jyl Pomeroy	15, Staff Party
May 11	11 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.	Alan Gelb	15, ??
May 31	1:30-4:00 p.m.	Peter & Amanda Cannell	32-35, 5th Grade Class Party

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, John Noble



The Sycamore Islander

6613 80th Place
Cabin John, MD 20818

<http://www.sycamoreisland.org>

To view this month's *Sycamore Islander* on the Internet, go to:
<http://www.sycamoreisland.org/condor/islander.htm>

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May 2002

This Issue:

- Islanders getting pumped up.
- Caretaking on the front burner.
- Building Committee reviews all.
- Spring Orientation a hit.
- Resident Caretaker anyone?



Ever wonder how your *Islander* gets printed and mailed out? The Co-editors deliver a camera-ready copy, along with the mailing-labels, to the printing company in Silver Spring. Motorcycle messengers sometimes make the delivery.

—Photo by Morris Cobern