



# *The Sycamore Islander*

*July, 2002*

*Volume 81 No. 7*

## **July Meeting**

The July meeting of the Club will be held on Wednesday, July 10th at 8:00 p.m. on the Island.

Our new caretaker, Joe Hage, was given a warm welcome by all who attended the June meeting. The President and Joe signed the employment contract a few minutes before the meeting was convened. Vice President Ann Marie Cunningham introduced Joe to the members and gave a sketch of Joe's life and career to date. Joe, in turn, told the meeting why he is looking forward with enthusiasm to caretaking for the Club. Joe will come on board August 5th. In the meantime temporary caretakers are being engaged until then.

A security system for the island was a main item of discussion at the June meeting. Tryon Wells reported on the ADT system he has been looking into. The question of the efficacy of such a system was discussed and a Security Committee was formed to consider options and come up with a proposal that can be acted upon at the July meeting. (See Minutes for details of the June meeting.)

- Carl Linden

## **Minutes of the June 12, 2002 Meeting**

The meeting was called to order by President Carl Linden in the Clubhouse shortly after eight o'clock. The following members were in attendance: Star Mitchell, Renee Dunham, Peggy Thomson, Ann Marie Cunningham, Candy Means, Marcia and George Loeb, Jane Winer, Tryon Wells, Bill Bays, Lawrence Heilman, Joe Hage (the new caretaker), Jeffrey Komarow, and Jim Drew.

**Corrections to May 2002 Minutes:** The Minutes from the last meeting were amended to include the fact that former caretaker Doc and his wife Phyllis had been made honorary members of the club. The Minutes were further corrected to state that at the last meeting a number of members had posed questions about the viability of the proposed security system, not that they disagreed as was stated. The Minutes were approved with these corrections.

Ann Marie Cunningham introduced Joe Hage who was selected to be the new caretaker. An article about Joe appears elsewhere in the Islander.

**Supervisors' Reports:** The Treasurer, Alan Gelb, was not present but had called to say finances were going as expected.

*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 August issue is receipt at the Editors' address on July 29. Earlier submissions receive priority.**

## June 12 Minutes (continued)

The Membership Secretary admitted he had not filed his required written report in May but now had the report on the current membership to provide to the meeting:

As of June 1, 2002 there were 155 regular members, 47 senior members, 16 inactive members, 23 honorary members, and 204 applicants on the waiting list.

Membership status changes from 2001-2002 included eight new members, five membership resignations, three new senior members, three withdrawals from the waiting list and 23 new applicants on the waiting list (all relatives of current members).

The turnover of eight new members is average to large, thus prompting the secretary to recommend we continue not adding new members to the waiting list with the exception of members' children as current applicants on the waiting list close to the bottom will have a 14-year wait. The secretary also read a lovely resignation letter from Charlie Trammell, Jr., a former president of the Club. He was made an honorary member after a motion was presented and passed. Carl Linden read a letter from Lila McGinty, Ken McGinty's widow, submitting her resignation. She is an honorary member and will remain so.

**Old Business:** Tryon Wells gave a security system report and stated that after making calls to several companies only one seemed affordable or returned calls. The ADT System, as reported last month, would cost \$2,900 for a one-time fee with a \$95 monthly fee to maintain the camera to be installed on the outside of the caretaker's quarters focusing on the landing on the far side. It was recommended that someone should visit or call others who have used this system to determine their satisfaction level with ADT. There was much discussion about the viability of this method as opposed to other systems. It was agreed that Jim Drew, Larry Heilman, and Bill Marmon would form the Home Island Security Committee to research security options and make a decision next month, so that it can be installed before the arrival of the new caretaker.

Easterday, the company chosen to inspect the well water did not come to the island this week to begin its work as a result of a misunderstanding with a temporary caretaker. The meeting is being rescheduled. Blair Bower was going to check the water quality of the well, but that has not been done. Because of lack of knowledge about the Island's water quality, there was concern about the Loeb's preparation of lemonade for the canoe race this weekend as well as water usage for the 21st of June during the Mid-Summer Night's Festival. In addition, while water seems to be potable, club members should be informed to bring their own water. Bill Bays, who is on the Water Committee, says the committee had yet to meet. It must do so to resolve this issue.

**New Business:** The Recording Secretary position is still vacant. It was agreed that there could be a team of four who would take responsibility for this. Larry Heilman agreed to take December, January, and February. Renee Dunham agreed to take three months. That leaves half of the year unattended. Possibly an ad will appear in the newsletter.

Larry Heilman reported that the water quality in the river is fine for swimming as determined by the River Commission and other pertinent groups.

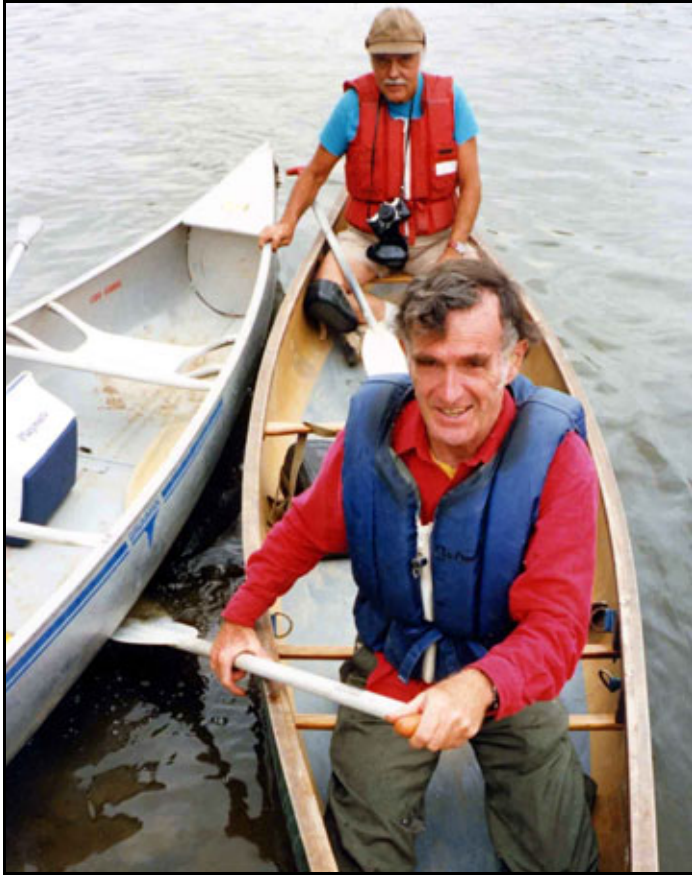
Jim Drew reported that two abandoned canoes on the island would be sold at a price yet to be determined and an ad would be placed in the newsletter. He also asked for approval to schedule a July Canoe Training Session run by club members for club members of all ages. It was approved. Earlier that evening he noticed the ladder coming loose from the swimming float, pulled it up, and intends to contact the appropriate person to get it re-attached.

The meeting adjourned about 10 p.m.

-- Candy Means,  
Acting Recording Secretary

## Paddling Legend Dies

**Dick Bridge, member of the Sycamore Island Club and one of the driving forces in the creation of the Canoe Cruisers Association, died suddenly at Montgomery General Hospital on June 19th. He was 81.**



**Dick Bridge in bow, with John Thomson, in the late 90s, at the start of a Great Falls to Sycamore Island race.**

Dick was a paddler virtually all his life. His love of whitewater sport was centered on the Potomac River, where he paddled from the time he was a young man. He was one of the first whitewater paddlers in the area.

He was affiliated with many local and national canoeing organizations: the Canoe Cruisers Association, the American Canoe Association

and the Olympic Sport Committee for Canoeing. He was also an international judge for slalom and wildwater racing.

River safety and education were central to his involvement in the sport.

In 1977 he was awarded the “Michelob Schooner,” a trophy presented annually by the Busch Brewing Company, for his twenty years of devoted and effective work in guiding river safety programs in the Washington area.

For over 30 years he was a canoeing instructor for the American Red Cross. He taught Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and inner-city children as part of a summer program conducted by the Canoe Cruisers Association of Washington, DC. He was also a certified canoeing instructor for the American Canoe Association.

In the early 1970s some of Mr. Bridge’s Mariner Scout protégés became international whitewater racing champions in the early days of United States participation in canoe racing.

Literally thousands of novice canoeists were introduced to the joys of canoeing by Mr. Bridge within the hidden urban wilderness of the Potomac.

—Jean Goertner

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*A Memorial Service for Dick Bridge will be held on the Island on July 25 from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. See p. 5 for more information.*



## Introducing Our New Caretaker

Joe Hage was the first candidate interviewed, and the preferred choice. He learned of the position from someone who has a lifelong affiliation with the Island, and therefore knows the job of caretaker better than most (with the possible exception, of course, of Doc Taliaferro). Our former caretaker Peter Jones and Holly Syrrakos have known Joe and his family for more than 10 years.

Although not a builder or professional carpenter, Joe has many of the skills of a handyman that will be of benefit to the Club. He has owned and operated a successful painting and decorating business for 16 years. He has also been placed in charge of coordinating the efforts of other contractors working on different aspects of projects.



**Joe Hage, attending his first Club meeting. First of many, we hope.**

Joe is a canoeist with a love of nature; “a great outdoorsman” in the words of a reference. He has been taking courses in Ornithology and Nature Interpretation and is about to take Wetlands Ecosystems, all toward a certificate in Natural History Studies, with

hopes of a change to an environmental career. He believes that working on the Island, and writing pieces for the Islander, will be a stepping-stone in that direction. He has been involved in a number



**The contract signing didn't seem to need any arm-twisting. Ann Marie, Joe, and Carl doing their John Hancocks.**

of community activities, including the PTA, environmental, and human rights issues. He believes that living and working on the Island will help to bring him closer to nature and to the fulfillment of his dream of a career as a naturalist.

Our new caretaker also brings a new dimension to the Club – he is the father of two girls, Kelsey, age 11, and Kaylen, age 9. As a single parent, he has custody of the girls for all but two months during the summer, and every other week during the school year. While we could imagine the Island as an ideal place for children to grow up, we were also well aware of the many challenges that are part of living on the Island. We therefore invited Joe, Kelsey and Kaylen to come to the Island for a second interview. Some of us had private chats with the girls, while the rest of our team were talking to Joe, and asking him questions relating to the girls living on the Island. He had considered everything we asked him about, and had an answer for most of them. He felt that having more time to spend with the girls since they wouldn't have to go to day care after school, the better schools they would be attending, and liv-



**Kaylen, left, and Kelsey will find island-living a new experience, with opportunities not readily available to mainlander kids.**

ing in a place as beautiful, interesting and natural as the Island would more than make up for the rest.

Those of us who chatted with the girls found them to be delightful. They were very friendly and comfortable with us. They talked of canoeing on Antietam Creek the prior weekend, knew the best bait for cat-fishing (cheese – we can learn something from these kids!), admitted that they would miss their friends in the old school, and were very excited about everything except the possibility of floods. They seemed to enjoy meeting with us almost as much as we enjoyed them. It helped them to feel comfortable about the Island as a new home and the new friends they would have, and reassured them that there would be help and support if a flood should come.

We were convinced that the Hage team would care for the Island as the special place it is, and would be a friend to all of us. We hope that you will give them a warm welcome after their arrival on August 5.

--Ann Marie Cunningham,  
with Carl Linden, Alan Gelb, John Matthews, John Stapko, and Pat Barry

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### **Memorial Service for Richard Benedict "Dick" Bridge, 1920 - 2002**

Pending approval (for a gathering of more than 35 people) at the July 10 meeting, a Memorial Service will be held at 3:00 p.m. on Thursday July 25. People may wish to come early, enjoy the Island, and visit with family and friends before and after the Memorial Service itself.

If you are planning to attend, please contact David Bridge for further information about the Memorial Service; Phone (evening) (703) 450-4782, Email: [bridgedavid@earthlink.net](mailto:bridgedavid@earthlink.net). For further information on parking and shuttle transportation from a near-by Park Service lot, contact: Jean Goertner, [jgoertner@prodigy.net](mailto:jgoertner@prodigy.net); (301) 871-8029.



# Reluctant Camper

—by Lilly Jay

My definition of a perfect summer day is a combination of playing outside, reading, and eating. But on Friday, June 21, 2002, my family and I spent the summer solstice on Sycamore Island (a sleep-over). We were not the only family. The idea, although appealing, was not what I planned for the day, but I found myself trudging down the rugged path to the ferry...



Most of the people that had arrived were setting up their tents giving my two brothers, my cousin, and me the perfect opportunity to go swimming in the surprisingly warm Potomac river! After swimming for a while (I didn't swim as long my brothers did but the amount of time I swam for was long enough to make myself look like one big prune.) I helped set



up our tent which I have to admit is not easy!

Dinner consisted of hamburgers, hot dogs and the basics. Afterwards

some of the kids played a game of stomping other people's balloons tied around ankles. The last balloon holder wins. This led to an unorganized water balloon fight with most running around trying not to get wet.



Instead of watching some media that night, fire flies, bonfire, and stars entertained us. Also, spontaneous storytellers took turns around the fire. When the clock in the kitchen hit eleven, campers started out to their tents. I slept lightly through the night, dreaming of a hot shower, my own bed and a nice book.



At about five a.m. we went swimming. This time the Potomac greeted us with an icy chill from the dock. Within an hour, campers were fishing; letting us join in and we even caught a few fish. As the morning rolled on, fishing drew a larger crowd of half-awake campers. After breakfast of peppery French toast, some went canoeing on the still waters, others fished, and some broke camp.

Now when I think of a perfect summer day I think of Friday, June 21, 2002. Thank you for making this possible!

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*Lilly Jay is 10 years old. Her parents, Molly Peter and Jeffrey Jay, are on the waiting list, and obviously participate quite actively in Club functions.*





## Dear Doc and Phyll:

The Caretaker's Wife's Solstice party on June 21 and 22, 2002, was a quiet success. About 31 families signed up to come, and there probably more than 50 of us, kids and grownups on the island at various times. We had a ball!



The tents were set up about 6 p.m., producing a mini tent city over the Sycamore grounds. George Loeb, Tove Elfstrom and Alan Gelb wielded wicked tools over hot coals to produce an abundance of sizzling hot dogs and hamburgers, complemented by wonderful salads, cakes and cookies brought by many and ushered in by Susan Elfstrom, Marcia Loeb, and lots of others. Renee Dunham coached a fast game of "balloon stomp" and led a happy viewing of the setting solstice sun.



These activities were soon followed by a grand bonfire. We were entertained under the stars and sparks by knock-knock jokes from the younger set, marshmallow s'mores, a reminder of "old times" at Sycamore from Betty Burchell that prompted many more reminiscences by the older

crowd, and a grand rendering of Robert Service's "The Cremation of Dan McGee" by Bill Banta. The morning was celebrated by a bunch of early rising fisherfolk and canoers. When the rest of us rubbed the sleep from our eyes, we were met by a grand breakfast of French Toast, juice and coffee rassed up by Jane and David Winer, with the assistance of Molly Peter, Marcia and other willing hands. George Loeb opened his 3-D model of Stonehenge and led an informal discussion of solstices, sun and moonlight measurement that led to the moon rather than the sun as the standard of measure for the year's events (giving us the months), and of stone age graph paper and other "primitive" cultures with tremendous astronomical intellect.



We didn't need to organize any other activities because folks were just enjoying Sycamore and having a wonderful time on a beautiful sunny Saturday.

Thanks to all the other unnamed (but appreciated) Islanders who lent their hands and hearts willingly to make the Solstice the great party that it was.

—Marcia Loeb



## 47th CCA Downriver Race

—By V. Star Mitchell, Race Liason

For the forty-seventh year Sycamore Island hosted the CCA Downriver Race on June 15, 2002. Tired racers were greeted at the take-out by Marcia and George Loeb and offered delicious cookies and ice-cold lemonade. Larry Heilman and his friend Peter Meleney ran the race as non-competitors in a tandem canoe.



A C-1 at the finish line (our ferry rope)

David Winer scurried about taking pictures with his trusty camera. Carl Linden, Marcia and George Loeb awarded racers medals and certificates. Our interim caretaker, Victor Crook, did an excellent job of ferrying hordes of people across the river and filling in for all odd assignments.

John F. Stapko did his usual behind the scenes problem solving of any and all loose ends that needed to be fixed, while his son, John G. spent a great deal of the day relieving Victor on the ferry. At the take-out, Phoebe Hamill (waiting list) retrieved racers' bibs in exchange for a race T-shirt. Sherry Pettie (waiting list) worked at Great Falls prior to the start of the race, as well as coming to the island for more assignments.

Fifteen dedicated people volunteered to be safety boats on the river. They were: Gus Anderson, Peter Dragon, Steve Ettinger, Frank Fico, Michael Hoon, John Lentz, Jim Long, Jim Mallard, Jean McAulay, Judy and Rod Pitts, Diana Rodum, Craig Rovelstad, Kathleen Sengstock, and last but not least, Dave Smith, owner of Potomac Outdoors, who ran safety and also provided us with four Marine Band radios.



The Loeb's dispensed much needed sustenance to contestants.

Robin Siegel and Bob Bofinger started racers at Great Falls. Ernie Katz, Steve Seeber, Bob Bofinger, and Donna Perlmutter worked tirelessly timing and calculating racers' runs. Cathy Collins, Darrell Helton, and Brian Krasney signed in racers at Great Falls, as well as coming to the island for more assignments.



Peter Meleney and Larry Heilman, in their open C-2.

Donna Perlmutter did an excellent job as Race Chairperson with all of the many behind-the-scenes jobs involved in organizing the race and planning numbers for T-shirts and lunch.

I wish to thank all of the dedicated people who took their time to come and help with the race. If I have failed to mention anyone by name that helped, I deeply apologize. The BCE and CCA coordinators and I especially wish to thank the Sycamore Island Club for playing host for the 47th consecutive running of the CCA Downriver Race from Great Falls to Sycamore Island.



# Technographer

Or, if you prefer shorthand to a laptop,

# Stenographer

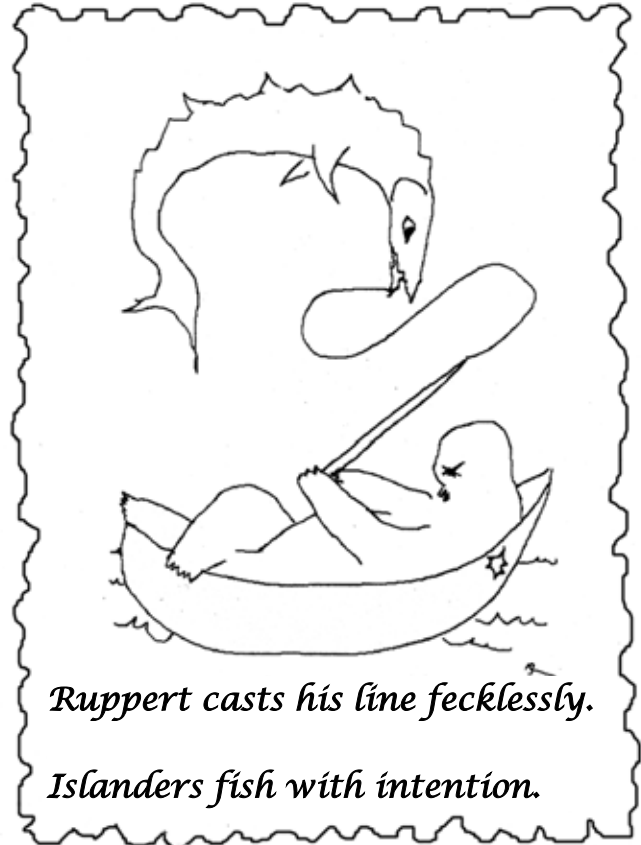
Or, if you prefer a quill pen,

*Secretary*

# WANTED!

Whatever tool you use, whatever title you prefer, we need you to become involved with our Club, to attend our meetings, take notes, and write the minutes. If you are willing to help, but can't commit to every month, please call. We can organize a team to share the responsibility. If you are curious about the job, read the article written by Renee Dunham in the January issue of the Islander. Then call Carl Linden at 301-229-2398.

## Ruppert



*Ruppert casts his line fecklessly.*

*Islanders fish with intention.*

Cartoon by Johnna Robinson

*Mark your calendars now!*

Sycamore Island's

# FISHING DERBY

**Saturday, August 10th, 2002 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**

*All members and waiting list members are invited.*

**A BBQ lunch will be provided.**

## Me, a Caretaker?

--by Victor Crook

The chance to work at Sycamore Island was something that I never thought that I would have. As with a large number of people, it came to pass that I went off to college and my parents moved overseas leaving me all by myself.

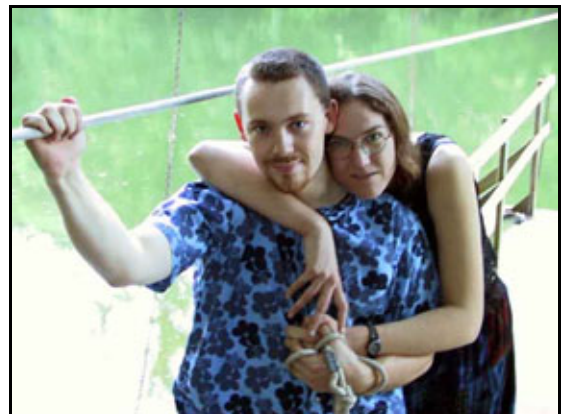


At the tail end of one summer vacation I decided to go down and say Hi to Doc. While down there, Doc mentioned that if I ever wanted to, I could “island sit” for a time. I thanked him and went on my way not thinking about his offer till about 2 years later. Then with the dark shadow of a major paper/project and a spring break that needed to be filled, I called Doc. He was overjoyed to hear from me. And I got my paper/project written during a working spring break last March.

At the beginning of this summer I got an e-mail from Doc asking if I would like to work on the Island for part of the summer. I took the offer and that is how I found myself on Sycamore Island on the first of June, facing the rest of the month.

It was a rather overwhelming thought... caretaker for an entire island. But with my trusty list of emergency phone numbers, a good flashlight and one pan, I forged ahead. The days went by and the quiet was intense especially after the Island closed for the night but improvements to some of the tedium started coming. First was the radio and second was the arrival of Caroline, my girlfriend.

Now towards the end of my time as the Sycamore Island caretaker I am sure that I will look back at my time there with happy



thoughts. The rather ironic thing is that although the club is recognized as being a canoe club, neither Caroline nor I have not gotten in a canoe yet. However we have gotten to go swimming every day as well as meet some of the local wildlife. There was the raccoon that got me up at 3:30 in the morning to say hello, the pleasant and rather docile black snake (now named Julia), as well as the vast numbers of birds and squirrels who frequent the Island. It was also very exciting to observe Caroline learn the joys of clearing the back paths of the Island with a machete. Caroline and I hope to come back to the Sycamore Island in the future and hopefully go canoeing.

—photos by David Winer



## Sunday Relief Caretakers July 2002

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Name(s)</b>	<b>Telephone</b>
July-07	9:00 - 3:00	Greg Hitz	202-226-2867
	3:00 - dark	Marcia & George Loeb	301-652-4229
July-14	9:00 - 3:00	Robert & Linda Blair	202-364-8747
	3:00 - dark	Charlotte Brewer	301-656-0467
July-21	9:00 - 3:00	Tam & Joe Belden	301-320-2884
	3:00 - dark	Milton & Patricia Cerny	703-527-4376
July-28	9:00 - 3:00	Lyle Blanchard	202-364-9579
	3:00 - dark	William & Rochelle Banta	301-718-4217
Aug-04	9:00-3:00	Barbara Kraft & Peter Winkler	301-320-2285
	3:00-Dark	Harry Schwartz	301-229-2285
Aug-11	9:00-3:00	Peggy & Mid Tilghman	301-320-5846
	3:00-Dark	Candy & Howard Means	301-320-5270
Aug-18	9:00-3:00	Nathan Means	202-234-5355
	3:00-Dark	Adrienne Allison	301-951-8007
Aug-25	9:00-3:00	Deborah Behr & Paul Kobernick	301-770-0044
	3:00-Dark	David and Sandy Robinson	301-320-4971

**\*\*\* 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 July 2002

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>What</b>
25-July	Noon-6:30	Jean Goertner John Heideman	~50 at Memorial Service for Club Member Dick Bridge, subject to membership approval at July 10 meeting.

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  
e-mail: [jnoble@erols.com](mailto:jnoble@erols.com), phone: 301-320-3554, fax: 301-320-4216



## *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/klondike/islander.htm>

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July 2002

### **This Issue:**

- New Caretaker!
- An unhappy camper gets happy.
- Summer Solstice Sycamore Stonehenge.
- Revelations of an Interim Caretaker.
- Racing from Great Falls to Sycamore Island.
- Remembering Dick Bridge.



What an adventure to tell of hardship, deprivation, and adversity—and ultimate triumph. See inside for Lilly's true story.