



# *The Sycamore Islander*

*December, 2002*

*Volume 81 No. 12*

## **December Meeting**

The December meeting of the Club will be held on Wednesday, the 11th at Peggy Thomson's. Once again Peggy is our gracious hostess providing her home for this important meeting. The meeting adopts the budget for 2003, elects next year's Club officers, and receives the annual report of the Personnel Committee. It is not all business, however, but also a most festive gathering with delectables and libations of the season on the table. Hope to see you there.

The November meeting moved efficiently and was relatively brief. Our Treasurer, Alan Gelb, was away, but provided a written outline of the 2003 budget with comparisons with the two previous years' budgets. Those present looked over the outline and briefly discussed its projections. George Loeb presented a series of tentative proposals aimed at finding ways of easing the waiting list log-jam and making elevation to senior membership more flexible. The meeting agreed that the

proposals be circulated to the membership as a whole for its reactions and recommendations. It is envisaged that the discussion will take place during the first months of the new year before any decisions are taken at the monthly membership meeting.

—Carl Linden, President

## **Minutes of the November Meeting**

President Carl Linden called the meeting to order shortly after eight o'clock. The following members were in attendance: Peggy Thomson, George Loeb, Jane Winer, Jeffrey Komarow, Jim Drew, Blair and Nancy Bower, Johnna Robinson, Carl Linden, Jerry Barton, Joe Hage, and Ann Marie Cunningham.

The minutes, as published in the *Islander*, were approved.

**Treasurer's Report (via email):** This year has been more costly than budgeted, due to the changeover of caretakers. As of 9/30/02, we had our reserve of \$50,000 plus a working balance of

*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.**

\$1,420. The balance should be enough for the rest of the year and the beginning of next year, excluding the cost of the well. A late bill for the plans for the new caretaker's quarters had been received. When the project gets underway again, the finances will be better controlled so that everything is accounted for in a timely manner.

Considerations for the draft 2003 budget include full funding for the publication of the *Islander*, capital expenses will be increased to cover the cost of the well repairs, medical expenses should be less, as the caretaker is covered by a different policy than the previous caretaker. The budget is expected to be 2-3% higher than this year's, in line with inflation.

**Membership:** There have been no changes.

**Caretaker:** The workfest is this Saturday (rain date the following Saturday), and we hope for a good turnout. Bring your rakes. PEPCO wants to change the deteriorating utility poles that were erected by the club in 1937. They will need to close the towpath for a day. The old ones will be kept on the Island.

**Editor:** Please send all contributions early.

**Entertainment:** George Loeb asked that everyone bring something to share for lunch during the Workfest. George and Shelley Malusky will help George and Marcia with the potluck lunch.

**New Business:** Johnna Robinson reported for John Matthews that the WSSC put some gravel on the path just below McArthur Blvd, but it is ill-suited for the purpose. They will fix it. The Park Service in Hagerstown will look at the path and the old bridge, which was built by the Club and is now badly rusting.

**Old Business:** Blair Bower asked whether \$8400 was the actual contract amount for the well repairs. Easterday's letter to Doc totaled about \$10,000.

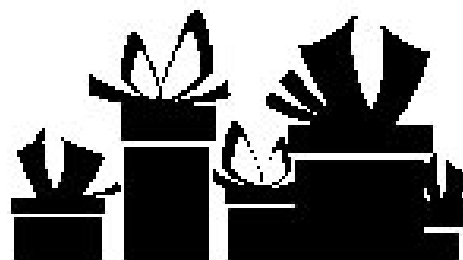
George Loeb discussed some possibilities for addressing the issue of the long waiting list. Be sure to read the article he has written for the *Islander* to present the issues and possible actions. The discussion recommended that we select something that would be simple to administer and reward those who contribute to the Island and the membership. It was suggested that we mail the discussion with the dues notices to elicit comments from the members and waiters.

Carl Linden presented a slate of candidates for the Club offices, to be voted upon at the next meeting. It is published separately in the *Islander*.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting is the Club's Annual meeting and will be held in the home of Peggy Thomson at 8:00 on Wednesday, December 11, 2002. The new officers will be selected, the budget approved, and then we will enjoy refreshments and Peggy's hospitality.

The very short meeting was adjourned before 9:00.

— Ann Marie Cunningham,  
Acting Recording Secretary



## *In touch with Joe...*



*This month has been marked by heavy rains, high water, falling leaves and some beautiful sunsets...*

The Island has been winterized and the trail has been improved. And I had my first encounter with a beaver.....beavers.

The wind and rain of this past month has stripped the trees bare, with yellow leaves falling over everything like an overnight snowstorm. The river got up to over five feet for the first time since I started in August, making for a slightly smaller island. That, combined with my new uninterrupted view of the water made me somehow more keenly aware of the fact that I live on an island and I am completely surrounded by water.

It has been great to have some water in the river and earlier this month I was able to take my canoe up river without the nuisance of so many rocks in the way. I was able to make it all the

way to Minnie Island. On the way I explored the mouth of Cabin John Creek and that's where I saw the beavers. There were three of them near a den-sized hole in the bank. They didn't seem too startled to see me and instead of swimming away one of them circled towards me in a menacing, defensive way. It got pretty close, gave me a good tail slap and was gone. The beaver have been visiting the island recently as well.

I was excited to see a Bald Eagle yesterday. It was the first I'd seen from the Island since starting here four months ago. I watched two Hermit Thrushes, and I identified some Ruby-crowned Kinglets. A group of Canada Geese seems to have moved into the neighborhood, messy neighbors. I found a dead catfish with teeth marks on it on top of some leaves in the middle of the island. Now I'm wondering if we have river otters.

The fruit of the persimmon tree is ready for harvesting. There's a tree on a small island in the channel that's full of crab apple sized persimmon fruit. Not tasty until after the first frost. Unfortunately, I was never able to find a paw paw in this forest of paw paw trees.

We are really enjoying our life on the Island. Finding it exciting to watch the river rise, counting the steps that are under water and making the river an integral part of our daily lives. We've come to the end of the first school marking period and I can proudly report that both students are doing extremely well. That's always a relief. Now we're headed into December with our fingers crossed for snow days.

—Joe Hage, Caretaker



# Fall '02 Workfest: Cold, Productive, Delicious



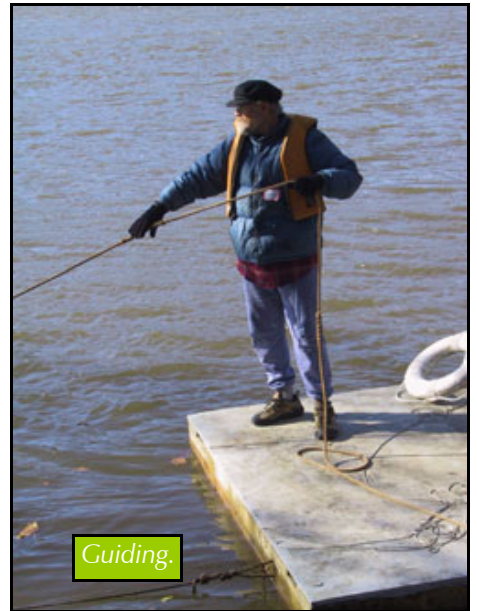




Planning dock strategy: the stevedores.



Hauling.



Guiding.



Going for the swim float. Cold. Windy. Tough guys only need apply for this job.



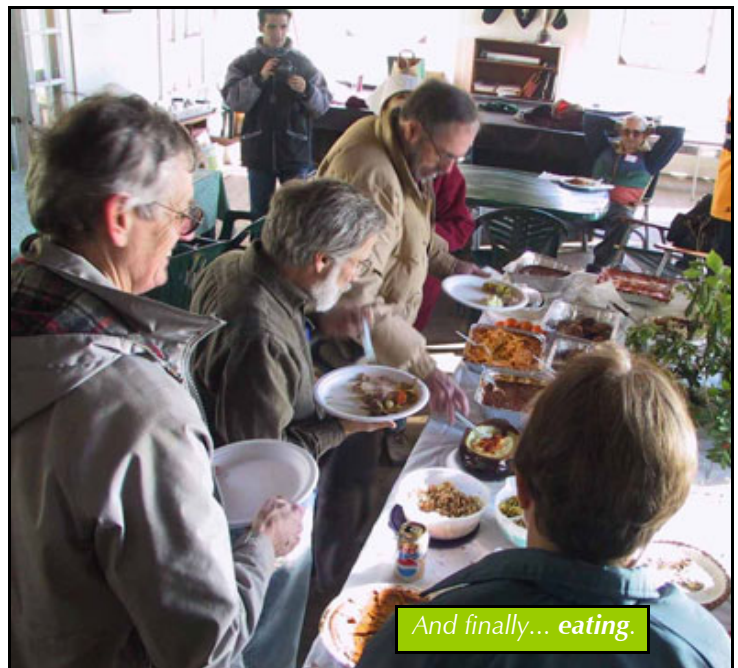
Hauling the heavy stuff.



Miming.



Cooking.



And finally... eating.

## Recipes from the Fall '02 Workfest

### Aunt Helen's Fluffy Pumpkin Pie

For two 9-inch or one 11-inch pie, both serving 16 to 20 people, line the pie plates with your best pie dough (using 1 pound or 3 1/2 cups, of flour.) Make a strong, fluted rim that extends about 1/2 inch above the rim of the dish. Do not prick the bottom of the pastry. Preheat oven to 450 °.

Blend 3 1/2 cups of cooked pumpkin (or canned pumpkin) with 1 cup of light brown sugar, 1 cup of white sugar, 1 teaspoon of salt, 3 tablespoons of light molasses, 3 tablespoons of Bourbon whiskey or light rum (optional but desirable), 3 teaspoons each of cinnamon and ginger, 1/4 teaspoon each of nutmeg and cloves, 4 egg yolks, 1 cup heavy cream and 3/4 cup of milk (a few droplets more if mixture is stiff).

Beat 5 egg whites until lightly foaming; beat in a pinch of salt and continue beating to form soft peaks. Beat in by sprinkles 2 tablespoons of sugar and continue beating to make stiff, shining peaks. Beat 1/4 of the whites into the pumpkin mixture; delicately fold in the rest. At once ladle the mixture into the pie shell(s), filling only to the rim of the pan.

Immediately bake the pie(s) in the middle level of the preheated oven for 15 minutes. When rim of crust colors lightly, reduce heat to 375 and bake 15 minutes more--lower heat if pastry browns too much. Lower heat again, to 350, and continue baking another 15 minutes or so, until the filling 2 inches from the edge of the pie is done (when you insert a tooth pick, it will come out clean). Turn off oven, leave door ajar and let pie sit for 20 to 30 minutes more. NOTE: If filling cooks too fast, it tends to turn watery--so keep your eye on things. Serve warm or cold, and pass whipped cream or vanilla ice cream separately.

*The Kuglers note: To give credit where credit is due, this recipe is from Parade magazine of 11/14/82 so that after 20 years it has passed the test of time as well as of taste.*

### Sally's Mother's Molasses-Oatmeal Cookies

Preheat oven to 325°.

1 cup sugar                      1 cup Crisco  
2 eggs                              1/2 cup molasses  
1/4 cup milk                      1-1/2 cup flour  
3 t cinnamon                      1 t salt  
1 t ground cloves                1/2 t soda  
3/4 box raisins                    3 cups rolled oats

Mix ingredients, spoon on to greased cookie sheets and bake until done (10-12 minutes).

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### Jane's Baked Grits

1 cup Quaker Quick Grits (see grits box)  
4 cups water (see grits box)  
1/2 cup of grated sharp cheddar or other hard cheese  
1 T dry mustard  
1/2 stick butter  
2 lightly beaten eggs  
1/2 cup or more of chopped onion

Follow cooking instructions on Quaker Quick Grits box for 6 servings of grits made on top of the stove. While grits are cooking add: 1/2 stick butter, 1/2 cup or more chopped onion, 1/2 cup or more of grated sharp cheddar, 1 tablespoon dry mustard, and 2 lightly beaten eggs. Pour mixture into a buttered casserole. Bake in a preheated 350° oven for 20 minutes. Sprinkle top with paprika or cayenne.

Serve hot. Leftovers may be sliced and fried for breakfast, or topped with chili for an anytime snack.

*Adapted from Fun for the Cook from Satsuma Tea Room in Nashville, Tennessee. If you are ever in Nashville, be sure to lunch downtown at Satsuma for authentic Southern cooking!*

There were many delicious preparations at the Workfest potluck lunch. We were able to get some of the recipes for you. DO try these at home!

Thanks go to Joan Kugler, Sally Strain, and Jane Winer for their contributions.



## Islanders' Musings: Sycamore Leaves

The Editors received a letter recently from Claire Collins Conner of Michigan about a strange leaf she and her husband, Don, found near their retirement home. They wondered if it could be a sycamore leaf, but were unsure because of the unusually large size. They decided to send the leaf to “Sycamore Island” for identification.

Well, we were just as unsure about this leaf as the Conners, so sent scans of the leaf to two botanists, inquiring if the leaf was from a sycamore tree. There are imported plane trees that that resemble sycamores, but no one felt confident to make a call from such limited data.

There the matter stood until on November 26, Joe Hage noted in his Caretakers' Log (on the Club's website) that his daughter, Kaylen, had found a sycamore leaf on the Island that was 16 inches across! He also noted that there is “quite a variety of leaves that fall from one sycamore. Some large some small, some with many peaks and some with so few peaks they resemble sweet gum leaves.”

This fairly well settles the matter—the Conners' leaf is likely not from some strange giant-leaved variety of sycamore, but now appears quite normally within the range of ordinary specimens. Judge for yourself from these photos.



**Kaylen's leaf (top) is sixteen inches wide, definitely from a sycamore. Some of its edges have crumbled off. This individual seems to lack the familiar characteristic shape we normally associate with the tree's leaf.**



**This fellow is also a sycamore on the Island, an example that Joe Hage observes has an appearance akin to a sweet gum leaf.**



**In comparison, the Conners' leaf, although unusually large, doesn't seem so strange after all. It's smaller and looks more “sycamore-like” than the above leaf.**



**Our logo—with the quintessential sycamore leaf pattern.**

## Current Nominees for 2003 Club Officers

Elections for Club officers and supervisors will be held at the December meeting. Nominations will be accepted from the floor then. The Nominating Committee (Carl Linden, Ann Marie Cunningham, Tryon Wells, Johnna Robinson, Jane Winer) is accepting names until then, and is now proposing the following:

### Officers

President ..... Ann Marie Cunningham  
 Vice-president ..... Jeff Komarow  
 Recording Secretary ..... Carl Linden/Peter Winkler  
 Treasurer ..... Alan & Caroline Gelb  
 Financial Secretary ..... Lisa Kliefoth  
 Membership Secretary ..... Bill Marmon  
 Editor ..... David & Jane Winer  
 Archivist ..... Holly Syrrakos  
 Captain ..... Tryon Wells  
 Deputy Captain ..... John Stapko

### Supervisors

Finance ..... Bill Eichbaum  
 Law ..... Maurice Tobin  
 Clubhouse ..... Karl Kosok  
 Grounds ..... Penny Doolittle  
 Painting/Carpentry ..... Charles Pill  
 Website ..... Tryon Wells  
 Entertainment ..... George & Marcia Loeb  
 Camping/Parties ..... John Noble  
 Canoeing ..... Jim Drew  
 Swimming ..... Tove Elfstrom  
 Relief Caretaking Scheduling ..... Candy Means

### *Ruppert*



Cartoon by Johnna Robinson





## Sunday Relief Caretakers December 2002– January 2003

Date	Time	Name(s)	Telephone
December 1	11:00 a.m. - dark	Bill Bays	301-320-2286
December 8	11:00 a.m. - dark	Patricia Hartge and Alan Strasser	301-907-6657
December 15	11:00 a.m. - dark	Sherry Smith and Donal O'Hare	703-821-2803
December 22	11:00 a.m. - dark	Bob Oakley	301-279-9103
December 29	11:00 a.m. - dark	Ned Goddard	301-229-5660
January 5	11:00 a.m. - dark	Elissa Free & Bill Nooter	202-537-1434
January 12	11:00 a.m. - dark	Stephen and Sally Herman <i>with</i> Richard and Judy Edelson	301-229-9172  301-951-0195
January 19	11:00 a.m. - dark	Whitney Pinger and Roger Pollack	202-686-5443
January 26	11:00 a.m. - dark	Jinny and Stan Fowler	301-299-3734

**\*\*\* Caretaker Volunteers \*\*\***

To volunteer for Sunday relief caretaking, call Candy Means: 301-320-5270.

Volunteers from the waiting list are encouraged. It's a great way to spend time on the Island!

## Large Parties December 2002

Date	Time	Who	What
Dec. 2	12 to 6 p.m.	Brian and Anne Waidmann	30 for Office Retreat
Dec. 12	2 to 4 p.m.	Alison Levine/Bob Palermo	20 for Child's Birthday 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  
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/mountain/islander.htm>

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### **December 2002**

- Proposals for proposals re the Waiting List.
- A budget bulge.
- Peggy Thomson hosts December meeting.
- Fall Workfest gets the jobs done.
- Workfest recipes.
- Examining sycamore leaves.



Nature's bounty. Where are these beautiful persimmons? Hint: you could be standing on Sycamore Island and easily throw a rock into their grove.  
—photo by Dave Winer