



The Sycamore Islander

August 2003

Volume 82 No. 8

President's Remarks

Did you know that Ruppert's Island was considered to be parkland? It was, at least by the ADC Map people, the folks who publish the detailed maps of the Washington Metropolitan Area. While it can be claimed that their mistake is understandable, since Ruppert's is so unblemished in appearance, and is accessible only through the C&O Canal Historical Park, we really don't want the general public to think that they are welcome there. Well, alert Islander Eric Simpson noticed the coloration on the map that indicated it was parkland. He took action and contacted ADC, to advise them of the error of the markings on their maps. ADC responded amazingly promptly, to say that it would be corrected in the 2004 editions of their maps.

I was impressed that Eric noticed the markings on the map, drew the obvious conclusions, and particularly, that he acted upon it. But it appears that Eric is that type of person. Eric also noticed that there weren't enough grills on the Island, now that the waters have receded and we're finally able to have picnics. This was partly due to one of the grills having been broken through exposure and old age. Joe had plans to replace this one, and by the time you read this, will most likely have done so. But my point in raising this subject is that if there is any deficiency on the Island, please let me know. My

phone number is in the Island directory, or you can contact me via email at AMCunning@juno.com. Now, I'm not suggesting that we're going to give the Island a make-over at your suggestion, but we are committed to maintaining the environment that we've grown to love, and want to know of ways that we can enhance it, or preserve it.

Most other communications I've received in the last month are covered elsewhere in the Islander. Another was from Doreen Sitler, the daughter of a late member of the club, who is interested in visiting the Island, and getting in touch with people who remember her father. If you remember Donald Sitler, please contact her via dsitler@starpower.net.

Another communication was from someone, who, after nearly nine years on the waiting list, is undergoing a divorce, and both of them want to preserve their position on the waiting list. This has resulted in a proposed change in the rules of membership that will be discussed at our next meeting. [Text of proposed changes on page two of this issue.] Please come if you have any opinions on this subject. The meeting will be held on the Island on Wednesday August 13 at 8:00. I hope to see you there.

-- Ann Marie Cunningham, President

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 Editor, Norman Metzger, 638 G Street, SE, Washington, DC 20003-2724 or by fax to 202/544-6027. Text and graphics may be sent as email attachments to nm2@bellatlantic.net in all common formats. **Note to submitters of announcements, articles, or letters: The deadline for inclusion in the August issue is receipt at the Editor's address by August 25. Earlier submissions receive priority.**

Two Amendments Affecting Split Couples to be Voted on at August Meeting

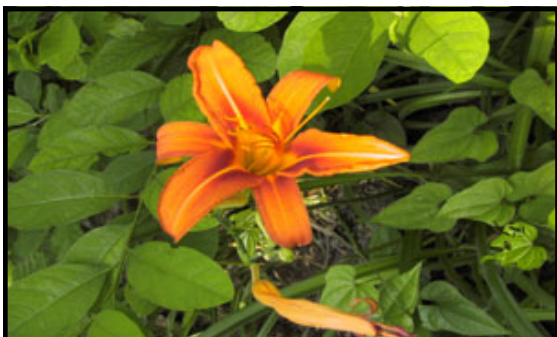
Proposed Bylaw Amendment - Membership

If a regular member is a couple who become separated or divorced, each partner may remain a full member upon written request to the Membership Secretary, entitled to one vote each. Each must pay full membership dues, and will be carried as an overage to the limit on Regular membership pending the next vacancy.

To Amend Standing Rule 12--Application for Membership

If an applicant on the waiting list is a couple who become separated or divorced, each partner may remain a waiting list candidate upon written request to the Membership Secretary, so long as a second non-refundable application fee is paid and so long as other requirements for waiting list candidates are fulfilled. In the absence of agreement by applicants, the Membership Secretary shall flip a coin to determine the order of the partners on the waiting list.

[As a reminder, such changes are voted on at a regular meeting only after advance notice in the Newsletter, hereby given. Bylaw changes require approval by two-thirds of those present at the meeting and eligible to vote, while a simple majority suffices for changes to standing rules. The August meeting will be held at the Island, weather permitting, on Wednesday, August 13th at 8 pm]



Minutes of the July 9, 2003 Membership Meeting

On a rainy night, we were unable to muster a quorum (10 members) on the Island. Those who did brave the weather were President Ann Marie Cunningham, Jim Drew, Jeff Komarow, Alan Gelb, Norm Metzger, Brad Coolidge, Peggy Thomson, Joe Hage, and Peter Winkler.

In the informal discussion that followed, Norm, the new editor of the *Islander*, asked if anyone had any ideas for future articles or columns. Please feel free to offer your suggestions to Norm at 202-544-6027 or nm2@bellatlantic.net.

George and Marcia Loeb had club T-shirts printed in time for the Midsummer Night's Festival, which was canceled because of rain and high water. The T-shirts, available in off-white or green, are now available for purchase.

Caretaker Joe Hage will be on vacation August 6 – 18. Ex-club member David Sitomer will serve as the replacement caretaker.

A large cake baked by Ann Marie was shared by the stalwart few. See you in August! The **next meeting** will be held in the Island Clubhouse on Wednesday, August 13, at 8 p.m..

— Peter Winkler

Fast, Colorful, Cheaper!

Those are the rewards for getting the *Islander* on-line. You see all the vibrant colors that *Islander* photographers work hard to capture, get the issue faster than by snail mail, can print the issue on your own machine, and save the Island some \$\$\$\$. Signing on is simple: Send an e-mail to islander@sycamoreisland.org asking to be added to the on-line list.

The Downriver Race: Delayed but Well Worth the Wait!

By V. Star Mitchell, Race Liaison

The 48th CCA/BCE Downriver Race was originally scheduled for June 14th, but due to high water the race was postponed to June 29th. The water level was 4.6 feet on that day, but at least not over the 5-foot limit that would have caused us to start the race at Old Anglers Inn. Whether it was the higher water or the postponing of the race, for some reason, only 12 boats entered the race.

Once again, Marcia and George Loeb of Sycamore Island greeted the racers with delicious cookies and lemonade. It was also a pleasure to have a member running in the race. Bill Marmon and his friend Richard Allen braved the higher waters and paddled in a tandem open canoe. I heard rumors that they took time to go for a little swim at Yellow Falls, but mind you, that was only a rumor that I am sure is not true! Nevertheless, they placed second in the OC-2, Plastic, Men's category. What an refreshing delight that our new, young caretaker, Joe Hage and his 10-year-old daughter, Kaylen, paddled the race in a tandem open canoe! Joe and Kaylen won the blue ribbon for the fastest time in the OC-2, Plastic, Parent/Child category. Not to be outdone by his brother, Peter Hage also entered the race in the OC-1, Plastic, Men's category. Peter took second place in his category. I hope Bill, Peter, Joe and Kaylen will inspire more of you to come out and paddle the race next year.

With Jeff Davis (CCA Safety Chairman and Instructor) doing his usual good job of training paddlers for safety on the river, 14 jolly souls turned out to help us with safety. They were decked-out in new orange

safety vests that I had purchased with Jeff's blessings. Our noble and loyal safety crew headed up by Steve Ettinger consisted of CCA members: Mark Brennan, Frank & Kathy Collins, Jane Collins, John Lentz, Jim Long, Jim Mallard, Jean McAulay, Dave Moulton, Dave Neubrech, Lee Tucker, Kathleen Sengstock, and Susan Sherrod. We wish to give these people a very special thank you for their time in helping us make the race a success. Our "land engineers" were headed up by "yours truly" and consisted of: Barbara Brown, Darrell Helton, Sloane Kuney, John Stapko (our island Deputy Captain), Jeff Ward, and Susan Whitney. Sycamore Islander, Lucy Marmon, helped us by standing at the head of the island, telling boaters to go left, and calling out with the "family hoot" to let the timers know that a boat was headed toward the finish line. We appreciated what these people did for us. Richard Perlmutter, the BCE Director of the Race, set up for the race, started the racers at Great Falls, brought in pizzas and drinks, tallied up the race results, and gave out the awards at the conclusion of the race.

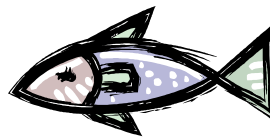
When I joined Sycamore Island "one hundred years ago," I only knew the members who were "hard core" boaters. In recent years, I've realized that most members probably don't have a clue as to what the Potomac River even looks like 1 mile (or less) north of the island. I would like to extend an invitation to you to join the Canoe Cruiser Association for Greater Washington, DC (CCA) and learn/or improve your canoeing or kayaking skills. Go to www.ccadc.org and you will see all kinds of opportunities and classes to improve your boating skills. You can print out a membership form. Membership is only \$25. If you don't know, throughout the summer, every Wednesday starting at 6:30 p.m., John Stapko leads a trip down the Potomac River from Old Anglers Inn to Lock 10. John would love to have you join his group.

Race Results			
<i>Class and Time</i>	<i>Winner</i>	<i>Class and Time</i>	<i>Winner</i>
OC-2 Plastic Men 56.49* (Best overall time)	Larry Lubbers and Bob Davis	Wildwater Men 57:38	Mark McNeil
OC-2 Plastic Men 1:26.00	Richard Allen and Bill Marmon	Wildwater Men 1:05:11	Lew Barker
OC-2 Plastic Mixed 1:21.06	John Paul Tolson and Janice Wolf	Wildwater Women 1:05.08	Beth Karp
OC-2 Plastic Parent/Child 1:36.06	Joe Hage and Kaylen Hage (Age10)	K-1 Plastic Men 1:12.29	Ivar Anderson
OC-1 Men 1:01.11	Tom Brubach	K-1 Fiberglass Slalom/ Women 1:04.11	Jeanne Fisher
OC-1 1:37.33 Men	Peter Hage	K-1 Fiberglass 1:04.13 Slalom/Men	Gio Gori

The CCA/BCE Race and Ribbons



Clockwise from top left: Mark Brennman; Richard Allen and Bill Marmon; Jeanne Fisher; Peter Hage; and Joe and Kaylen Hage. Photo of Mark Brennman by Susan Whitney; other photos by Barbara Brown.



Fishing Derby at Sycamore Island! Saturday, August 16th 8:30AM-12:30PM

All members, their guests and waiting list members are invited to Sycamore's 2nd Annual Fishing Derby. This event is sure to be a hit for the avid fisherman as well as the entire family. Last year's competition was tough, with some great anglers catching a lot of bass, bluegill and catfish. This year, however, might be more difficult. Heavy rainfall has created poor water clarity as well as cooler water temperatures. Mother Nature might just prove to be our toughest competition!

Prizes will be awarded to those who catch the biggest, smallest, ugliest, most, and even for No-Fish. Bring your favorite fishing picture (of yourself) and receive an instant prize! A delicious BBQ lunch will follow the day's events. Please let George and Shelley Malusky know that you are coming so they can plan accordingly. They'll be happy to answer any questions and can be reached at 301-871-1707 or shelleymalusky@yahoo.com.

Strong Opposition to the Georgetown University Boathouse

By Sally C. Strain

[While this article reports publicly expressed views by several members on the issue, Sycamore Island as an organization has not taken a position.]

Sycamore Island Club members opposed to Georgetown University's proposal for an enormous boathouse made their views known to the DC Zoning Commission during May and June.

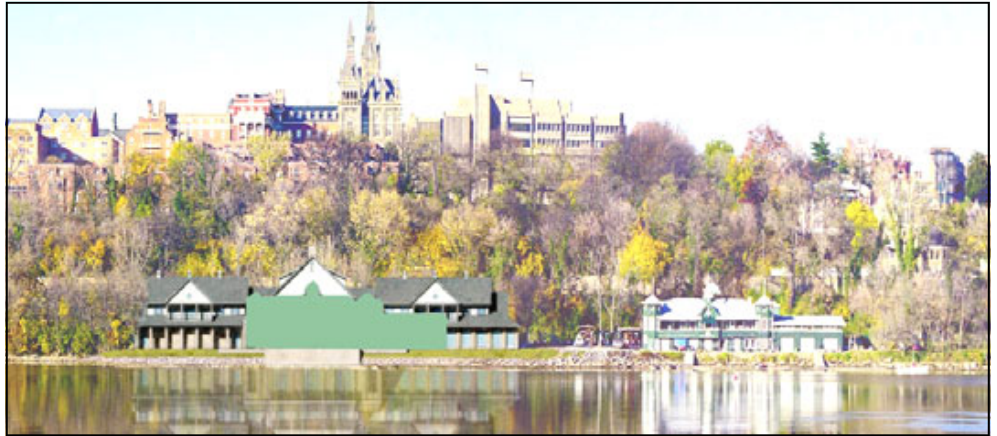
In letters and testimony to the Commission, Carl Linden, Irene and Robert Sinclair, Sally Strain and David Winer all protested the size and location of the proposed private facility. The structure, adjacent to and 96' upstream of the Washington Canoe Club, would be seven times larger than the WCC, towering 65' above the river, and situated 7-15' from the edge of the river with a 75 foot dock extending out into the water.

As part of a land swap arrangement with the National Park Service, the building would be constructed at the gateway to and within the C&O Canal National Historical Park, on a narrow strip of land between the Capital Crescent Trail and the river.

Carl Linden in his testimony before the DC Zoning Commission pointed out that:

Our C&O Canal National Historical Park was designed to protect all the scenic treasures along the whole length of the canal and river. The Park Service fails in its manifest duty when it is ready to yield up such treasures for the private enjoyment of the few and at the public's cost. This is the core issue before us. . . . What was the University thinking when this massive, four-storied boathouse was designed and then to be wedged into the narrow strip of park land between the Crescent Trail and the C&O Canal, on the one side and the Potomac shore line on the other. It invades park land not only at a point of very constricted land access but a poor point of access to the river close by the rocky shallows of the Three Sisters

outcroppings. The real solution is clear. Prevent the loss of park land and the obstruction of the grand view from the C&O Canal National Historical Park by locating the boathouse site in the section the NPS is reserving for water activities between Key Bridge and 34th St. . . . Access to the river is far better in this section of riverfront and the view, incidentally, superb.



Proposed GU Boathouse, on the left, and the Washington Canoe Club on the right, with an outline image of the WCC layered on the proposed GU Boathouse. Photo courtesy of GU; layering by David Winer.

Irene and Bob Sinclair wrote a letter to the Chairman of the DC Zoning Commission citing many reasons for rejecting the proposed boathouse, such as:

The encroachment on a unique resource – the undeveloped semi-wilderness upriver from Georgetown. Any development on this land would be unacceptable. . . . The mind-boggling distortion in terms of scale. The boathouse would dominate all the buildings upstream from Washington Harbour, and unlike WH, it would not even be set back from the riverThe encroachment on the Potomac River itself. . . . The use of the Capital Crescent Trail for access. . . .

Sally Strain testified as a Palisades resident and spokesperson for the Defenders of Potomac River Parkland, whose views were shared by the following groups: DC Chapter of the Sierra Club, Audubon Naturalist Society, American Canoe Association, C&O Canal Association, Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail, Washington Canoe Club, League of Women Voters of the District of Columbia, the Association of the Oldest Inhabitants of the District of Co-

lumbia, Potomac Pedalers Touring Club, Committee of 100 for the Federal City, National Parks Conservation Association, and the American Whitewater Association. The alliance was formed in April, and is dedicated to the protection and preservation of the undeveloped shoreline and riparian zone between Key Bridge and Chain Bridge.



Looking downstream from the proposed GU Site, just beyond Key Bridge. Photo by Norman Metzger

Her testimony included these objections to the proposal:

The size of the structure is enormous and inappropriate for the site. The height, length, depth, width and bulk of the structure, in addition to the new access road, dock and proximity of the building to the CCT, Towpath, Canal bank and river, would all have negative environmental and visual impacts on the recreational opportunities offered along the waterfront.

The risks and difficulties of building, servicing, maintaining and using an enormous building on the site – a narrow section of flood plain over a corroding sewer line – are considerable. They include potential runoff into the river from rain or flooding of up to

25,000 cubic feet of fill required to establish a level grade during construction, as well as unknown safety considerations and potential damage to a leaking Canal bank. Traffic and parking needs during and after construction are unknown, and no traffic study has been done or reviewed by the public.

A better location – with both environmental and practical advantages – is available downstream of Key Bridge, on degraded land needing redevelopment.

David Winer in his testimony before the Commission expressed his astonishment

. . . that organizations that are the stewards of the land proposed for a private boathouse would consider placing it on public parkland. It is even more astonishing that the proposed project is so invasive and ill-suited for the particular piece of land.

He added that:

The users of the downtown Potomac, the Capital Crescent Trail, and the C&O Canal are going to be shocked and dismayed by this project once its size and location become known. . . .

. . . This is not a typical boathouse, but rather a palace of a boathouse. . . . If a boathouse should be built along this stretch of the river, it should be in scale with other facilities, and especially, it does not need to be placed on undeveloped parkland.

There is simply not enough space on and beside the trail to incorporate the roadway necessary to service this huge facility. Where will the trucks, trailers, buses, and autos go when the facility is used for races and social functions? . . .

The needs of the public seem to be under-

stood poorly. This is not a little used piece of park. The traffic along here is intense at times, so much so, that the various recreational and commuting users of the CCT frequently interfere with each other. . . .

The hearing took place 5/19, 6/5 and 6/19 for a total of 12 hours. The DC Zoning Commission is now reviewing the letters and testimony, as well as the rebuttals to the testimony from the applicant (Georgetown University) and the opposition.

Three organizations, the Washington Canoe Club, the Capital Crescent Trail, and the C&O Canal Association, all received “party” status at the hearing as the most affected groups from the proposed boathouse, allowing them to submit special comments/rebuttals in opposition to the proposal following the hearing for consideration of the Commissioners.

The DC Zoning Commission has not indicated when they will make a decision on the application for the boathouse. [N.B. The hearing record was closed June 27th.] Those interested in staying up to date on this issue are welcome to contact Sally Strain at seawalk@starpower.net.

[Editor's Note: In early July, the DC State Historic Preservation Officer, Lisa Burcham, ruled that the proposed Boathouse is subject to a "106 Review." Barbara Zartman, active both in Georgetown civic affairs and in the Committee of 100 for the Federal City, notes that "the 106 process can be triggered whenever federal dollars or resources are being spent. The Georgetown University boathouse is on land now owned by NPS....The Historic Preservation Office will review the entire Georgetown Waterfront Park plan, and all structures associated with it."]

In Touch With Joe....

Our new utility poles have been installed. The cedar pole we had since 1936 has been replaced by a taller fiberglass one. The power cable is now a comfortable twenty feet or so above the river surface. The crew from Pepco, a hard working bunch of good guys, impressed me. And we have good news from the naturalist: The geese have decided to go somewhere else this month and the lack of droppings on the dock is a welcome change. The dragonflies are everywhere. They are so pretty and there are so many different types. You can see the aquatic exoskeletons of their past lives discarded on the docks. I saw a very large moth earlier this month; its known as the polyphemus moth and it was bigger than my hand! The eyespots on its back wings give it its name; Polyphemus was a one-eyed giant from Greek myths.

It's hard for me to believe that I've lived on Sycamore Island for a year already. That's right, by the time you read this it will have been a year since I brought my eight ferry loads of stuff out to this little spit of land in the middle of the Potomac river and started calling it home. In retrospect that this has been the most incredible year of my life. It's true; we did feel somewhat isolated when the river was so high but thankfully the river was kind to us during our first year and never reached flood stage once. Yes, it has been a great year. The kids have adjusted to their new life and seem to be doing well, and I have been able to complete three courses in natural history, ecology, geology, and evolution. I've enjoyed living closer to the natural world and I feel myself adjusting to the slower pace of life down here. I also feel proud of all the projects I've been able to complete and I feel that all the new friends I've made on the island have enriched my life.



Sycamore Island Regatta

September 1, 2003

1:30 pm until dark

The long-awaited Umpteeth Annual Sycamore Island Regatta is almost here! The event is open to all Sycamore Islanders - *including all you folks on the waiting list*. Especially welcome: kids and their families. Events center around the water and learning to canoe.

The Club will provide pizza at about 5:30 pm. you should come with side dishes and drinks - enough to share. Don't forget the swim suits.

Events include:

- The famous canoe dash around Sycamore Island
- A vast treasure hunt, ranging throughout the entire visible cosmos in the vicinity of Ruppert's Island
- Lance-a-lot jousting tournament
- Canoe swamping (in which swamping is *intentional*)
- Balloon stomp
- Other exciting contests as time permits

Volunteers, commissions, praise, donations: call Bill & Rochelle Banta, 301-718-4217. or e-mail wcbanta@comcast.net

All other matters: 555-1212

A Few Small Repairs...

The ferry's been sinking. At the bow end, water has been getting into the front compartment and making the easy task of ferrying into a struggle.

At the spring Workfest, we tried some epoxy on the open gash at the front of the left pontoon but it soon succumbed in the following weeks to being bashed time and again into the steps at the Maryland landing. So, in mid-July, John Matthews, David Winer and I coordinated with caretaker Joe to walk the ferry down to the canoe dock and put the front half of the ferry on it (a valuable trick first discovered at the spring workfest). Easier to do with six or eight people, we four eventually managed to hoist the beast into place, one pontoon at a time.

Then it was time to suck out all that river water in the front compartment. Joe fed the small tube into the first of three pontoon access holes while I attached a little drill pump to an electric drill. Moments later, river water was gushing forth and the front compartments of the pontoons were free of water (we assumed the other compartments were fine).

David Winer then stepped up and mixed up a batch of Marine-Tex -- a super epoxy that is in use in many marine environments. After carefully cleaning the cracked stems on the pontoons, Joe forced the mixture into all cracks and suspicious openings. He then reinforced the leading edge with fiberglass, and smeared a coating of the black super goop over that. We left the ferry on its "dry dock" to sit for a day.

Only time will tell if this fix will keep the ferry afloat. But right on the heels of his successful design for a sturdy plank at the end of the ferry, John Matthews is further designing a protective railing for the pontoons. We look forward to the result. [N.B. John Matthew's proposal for a protective railing will be in the September issue of the *Islander*.]

-- Tryon Wells



Getting Ready
Draining
Pumping water out
Applying Marine-Tex
Photos by David Winer

New Island Shirts Just in Time for Fall Fashions!



Models, left to right: Joe Hage, Marcia Loeb, Kelsey and Kaylen Hage.

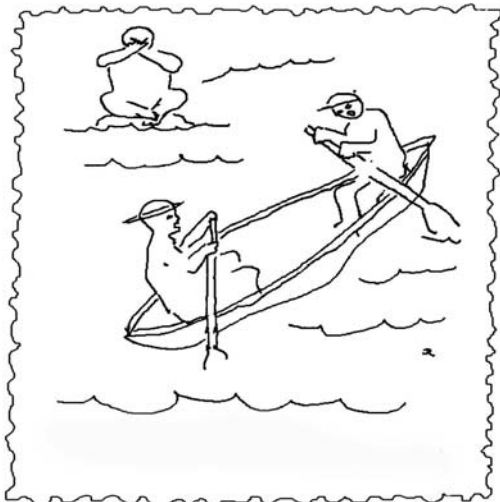
Photo by George Loeb

When we were planning the Solstice Party for this year, the Club thought it would nice to have club T-shirts available for the members who wished to buy them. The Party was rained out but the T-shirts weren't! Now available in two classy styles, both adult and kid sizes: Forest green with orange and white to set off the Sycamore leaf and light brown paddles, and off-white with a green logo and dark brown paddle. They will be available at Island affairs and from Joe any time he's at the Island. You can adopt them while they last for ten dollars apiece. Checks can be made out to the Sycamore Island Club and sent to our financial secretary, Lisa Kliefloth, 6613 80th Place, Cabin John, MD 20818

So get your T-shirts while they last. Help the Island look well dressed!

— George and Marcia Loeb

Ruppert



*Ruppert Watches Uncanny Canoers.
Islanders take lessons and know how.*

— Created by Johnna Robinson

Sunday Relief Caretakers August—September 2003

Date	Time	Name(s)	Telephone
August 3, 2003	9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Toby and Janet Smith	703-553-7732
	3:00 p.m. - dark	Janis and Richard Pappalardo	301-229-8360
August 10, 2003	9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Wayne and Susan Limberg	703-533-8639
	3:00 p.m. - dark	Penny and Bob McNulty	301-229-6453
August 17, 2003	9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Silvija Strikis and Miguel Browne	703-748-4671
	3:00 p.m. - dark	<i>Call to volunteer!</i>	
August 24, 2003	9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Anne and Brian Waidmann	703-536-3168
	3:00 p.m. - dark	Eric and Rene Simpson	703-821-7556
August 31, 2003	9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Paul London	301-229-1221
	3:00 p.m. - dark	<i>Call to volunteer!</i>	
September 6, 2003 *	9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Robert and Aimee Lehrman	202-387-8686
	2:00 p.m. - dark	Sherry Pettie	202-965-5366
September 13, 2003 *	9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	<i>Call to volunteer!</i>	
	2:00 p.m. - dark	<i>Call to volunteer!</i>	
September 20, 2003 *	9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	<i>Call to volunteer!</i>	
	2:00 p.m. - dark	<i>Call to volunteer!</i>	
September 27, 2003 *	9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Greg Hitz and Mary Quigley	301-229-2998
	2:00 p.m. - dark	<i>Call to volunteer!</i>	

***September Relief Caretaking Days are on Saturday**

*** 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

Date	Time	Who	What
No Large Parties Reported for this Issue			

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, phone: 301-320-3554, fax: 301-320-4216



The Sycamore Islander

6613 80th Place

Cabin John, MD 20818

ADDRESS SERVICES REQUESTED

<http://www.sycamore.org>

To view this month's Sycamore Islander on the Internet, go to:

<http://www.sycamoreisland.org/rosie/islander.htm>

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August 2003

- Proposed Changes to Bylaws/Standing Rules
- Fish in August, Joust in September
- The GU Boathouse (con't)
- Four Guys and a "Small Repair"
- New Island Fashions!



Waiting for Action

Photo by Norman Metzger