



Rakers' Progress

Photo by David Winer

The Sycamore Islander

December 2003

Volume 82 No. 12

President's Message

Betty Burchell, a member for forty-five years, died last month of a heart attack. Betty was one of the first members that I met after joining the Club. She was one who truly loved the Island, and wanted to keep its natural environment preserved for all of us and our children. John Thomson, in his centennial edition of the *Islander*, published a report about some archaeological work she had done on Ruppert's Island, in cooperation with American University. There were some Indian artifacts that indicated settlement along the Potomac at a time that was previously unknown. She continued her avocation with work at Great Falls and elsewhere along the Potomac. Once she took me on a tour of the old village she was helping to excavate on the Virginia side of Great Falls. I will miss her. [See appreciations in this issue of Betty's life by Renee Dunham and Jane Winer .]

The first meeting of the new committee to raise the caretaker's quarters above the likelihood of floods met at Dave and Jane Winer's house. (The river level was too high to meet on the Island, and they graciously agreed to host the meeting at short notice. Fortunately, this time the water did not threaten the quarters.) Those in attendance agreed on several objectives. First, the quarters should be moved above the flood level. Secondly, the character of the clubhouse should be preserved. The clubhouse and quarters should meld with the natural environment. Third, the club should be built as economically as possible, without any undue risks. And, lastly, the quarters should be somewhat larger than they are at present, because it appears that the years of the sole caretaker are over. For the last twenty years, there has been more than one person living in that apartment. And the club has benefited from having more than one person on the Island. At the next meeting, the committee will investigate the possibilities of building within the current footprint of the clubhouse. If you are willing to provide your interest, support and expertise, please come to the meeting at 2:00 on Sunday, December 14, on the Island.

Our next meeting is the Annual Meeting. There is important business to conduct. The members will elect the officers for next year, approve next year's budget (see Alan Gelb's article and the proposed budget), and decide upon a dues increase. These discussions always are very amicable and quick, primarily because of the aromas wafting from Peggy Thomson's dining room and kitchen. Mostly, the annual meeting is a wonderful social event. We don't have too many opportunities to see our Island friends during the winter. Please make use of this opportunity. The Annual Meeting will be at Peggy's house at 23 Grafton Street, Chevy Chase, MD. I look forward to seeing you at 8:00 p.m. on December 10.

— Ann Marie Cunningham

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. **Note to submitters of announcements, articles, or letters: The deadline for inclusion in the January issue is receipt at the Editor's address by December 26th. Earlier submissions receive priority.**

Minutes of the November 12, 2003 Membership Meeting

Present: Jane Winer, David Winer, George Malusky, Tryon Wells, Gerald S. Barton, Peggy Thomson, Star Mitchell, Carl Linden, Jeff Komarow, Alan Gelb, Jim Drew, Johnna Robinson, Faith Earll, and Peter Winkler

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 8:10 p.m. by Vice-President Jeff Komarow, in the absence of President Ann Marie Cunningham. Jeff reported the death of long-time member Betty Burchell, and gave details regarding her memorial service. The minutes of the October meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Alan Gelb reported that we took in about \$60,000 in dues this year, and about \$1,000 in interest. Our reserve fund has \$50,000. Currently, we are a little below budget on expenses. Alan estimated that expenses will rise about 2.5 percent next year owing to inflation. If we do not raise dues for next year, we are betting that expenses will continue to run under budget. Several members pointed out that caretaker Joe Hage has saved us money this year by repairing certain things and conserving others.

Captain's Report: Captain Tryon Wells reported that the fall Workfest went well. Attendance was not great, but tasks were completed successfully: leaves were raked, the big tree that fell was cut up (primarily by John Stapko, John Matthews, and Gerry Barton), the float came in, etc. Caretaker Joe Hage agreed with Tryon's favorable assessment. A question has arisen about deferred maintenance: Johnna Robinson said that it is time for a flue cleaning. Several people responded that we could do it ourselves. With respect to the roof, Tryon said that it will come to the end of its expected life in 2-3 years. At the appropriate time, he will make a proposal to add a roof over the roof. Star Mitchell asked if she might purchase a new oven rack and stove rings for the Club kitchen. Approved.

Nominating Committee Report: Carl Linden stated that George and Shelley Malusky will take the reins next year of the Entertainment Committee from George and Marcia Loeb, to whom we all owe many thanks. All other officers and supervisors (with the exception of Carpentry/Painting Supervisor Charles Pill, whom Carl had not been able to reach) have agreed to serve another year.

Old Business: Tryon Wells' motion regarding the funding of the *Islander*, set forth in last month's edition of the *Islander*, was brought up for discussion. Tryon amended the motion: instead of charging extra for the *Islander*, we would reduce fees by \$20 for members and waitlisters who chose to receive the *Islander* electronically. The pros and cons were ably set forth by Tryon and David Winer. In the discussion that followed, Star Mitchell observed that the Canoe Cruisers had adopted a similar policy. Others questioned the premise of cost-savings underlying the proposal. The vote on the proposal was a 6 to 6 tie, and thus the motion did not pass. Gerry Barton then moved that those receiving the *Islander* electronically receive a \$10 discount on membership. That proposal was voted down.

New Business: Jeff Komarow proposed that we increase the number of regular members from 155 to 160. Jeff will formally present this motion at the annual meeting. His intent is to raise the membership gradually, until members are satisfied that it is the optimal size. This motion will require a change of the Club's by-laws and will be published in the *Islander*. Faith Earll proposed that we open the waiting list for children of members, but otherwise continue to leave it closed. Tryon asked if we couldn't wait until January, after the annual meeting, to consider this issue, and Faith and others agreed.

Peggy Thomson agreed to host once again the annual meeting, on December 10. Pot-luck desserts are encouraged. The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

-- Peter Winkler, Recording Secretary

From Holly Syrrakos, Island Archivist: 75 Years Ago At Sycamore Island Minutes from the December 10, 1928 Meeting

The meeting was held on the Island, called to order at 8:50 p.m. by Vice President Custis because President Wilcox was "out of the city." There were nine members present, including the Vice President. "Captain Cole reported that the float had been removed from the river and that the water system had been turned off. He also reported that a large supply of firewood had been obtained. Moved and passed, at Mr. John F. Richter's request, that his election be rescinded and that his stock payment be retained by the Club until Spring. This in view of the fact that Mr. Richter will be unable to remove his canoe from the Washington Canoe Club until then and would therefore have to pay dues at both places. Moved and passed that the Treasurer be authorized to purchase stationery at a cost not to exceed \$3. Moved and passed that \$50 be made available to Mr. Whipple for the Christmas party." The club also approved expenditures including \$2.50 for a "Regatta Picture Frame" and \$1.80 for "Lamp Shades for Hill lights."

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

MONTGOMERY SYCAMORE ISLAND CLUB
OFFICERS AND SUPERVISORS 2004

TO BE VOTED ON AT THE DECEMBER 10 MEETING

OFFICERS

President **	Ann Marie Cunningham	703-876-9165
Vice-President **	Jeff Komarow	301-897-5996
Recording Secretary	Carl Linden	301-229-2398
Treasurer **	Alan & Caroline Gelb	301-229-5969
Financial Secretary	Lisa Kliefoth	301-229-2158
Membership Secretary	Joe and Tammy Belden	301-320-2884
Editor	Norman Metzger	202-544-6027
Archivist	Holly Syrrakos	301-891-4940
Captain **	Tryon Wells	301-320-6762
Deputy Captain * **	John Stapko	301-953-1949

SUPERVISORS

Finance **	Bill Eichbaum	301-229-1713
Law * **	Maurice Tobin	202-232-0220
Clubhouse	Karl Kosok	301-589-0034
Grounds *	Penny Doolittle	301-229-5632
Painting/Carpentry	Charles Pill	703-524-8254
Website	Tryon Wells	301-320-6762
Entertainment	George and Shelley Malusky	301-652-4229
Camping/Parties	John Noble	301-320-3554
Canoeing *	Jim Drew	202-462-3836
Swimming *	Tove Elfstrom	703-533-5537
Relief Caretaking Scheduling	Candy Means	301-320-5270

CARETAKER

Joe Hage 7023 MacArthur Boulevard, Bethesda, MD 20816 301-229-4921

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jessie Bakeman	William Kugler	Jack Sanders
Blair Bower	Carl Linden	John Schubert
Warren Brown	George Loeb	Tryon Wells
Bradford Coolidge	David Lyles	
Richard Doolittle	George Malusky	
Bill Eichbaum	John Michener	
Richard Fellows	Clifford Russell	

STANDING COMMITTEES

* = Safety Committee ** = Personnel Committee

Planning Our Budget for 2004 -- and Beyond.

The picture for 2003: Over the past several years the club has been adjusting budgets gradually, to reflect general inflation while maintaining a constant level of activity. As shown in the table on the next page, the budget for 2003 made some adjustments relative to 2002. The budget as approved by the December 2002 meeting was \$64,388. There was some extra capital allocation for the well, which was partly offset by assumed lower spending on other capital items; and also an increase for the *Islander*, which was previously under budgeted. Given where we are now, the projection for our spending through the end of the year 2003 is right on the budget. We were very lucky in avoiding serious damage during the floods—had the large tree in the center of the island fallen a few feet from where it did, we would have lost part of our canoe shed. This points to the importance of maintaining a reasonable reserve for the club. We have also been careful in routine and maintenance spending. This has helped us to absorb the cost of the well. At the end of October, we had \$50,000 in reserves and \$22,801 in working balance, following a last deposit from dues. If the budget projection is correct we will end the year with our reserve plus about \$7,000. This gives us about a minimum carry-over until the 2004 dues come in. This means that we enter 2004 with a well-balanced situation, but one where we have little slack in the budget.

On the income side, the position in 2003 was as follows:

Regular Members	156 @ \$276	\$43,056
Senior Members	48 @ \$138	\$6,624
Inactive Members	15 @ \$69	\$1,035
Wait Listers	169 @ \$22	\$3,718
Passes	62 @ \$138	\$8,556
Canoe fees	23 @ \$27	\$621

Total Income \$63,610.

To this we add \$1000 interest etc., for a total of about \$64,600. Our income is therefore just about equal to our budget.

The Budget for 2004 -- and Beyond. Our budget for 2004 should be considered against our plans, especially for improving our building to move the caretaker's quarters out of the flood zone while staying within our existing footprint. Excluding such plans, the 2004 budget [next page] holds the line at \$64,711, which is little above our 2003 budget although consumer prices and costs have risen, over the year, by about 2.5%. One factor is higher projected insurance costs. These have risen a great deal in recent years, and hopefully the rate of increase will slow down. We can fund such a budget with current levels of dues.

If however, we intend to move forward on improving the building, we should make some provision in the 2004 budget to avoid sharper increases later or a large special assessment. We can finance construction in several ways, such as temporarily drawing down our reserve a little, and by borrowing from members. The reserve will need to be reconstituted however, and member advances will need to be repaid. An increase of 5% in dues (an increase of about \$13 per member) pro-rated to apply to all charges, would yield us only about \$3,000 extra; an increase of 10% prorated would yield us \$6,000 extra. This is the bare minimum we should seek to raise at the start of 2004 if we expect to incur medium-level capital construction expenses during the year. The December meeting should therefore discuss dues in the context of considering plans.

-- Alan Gelb

Sycamore Island Budget For 2004

	2001 Budget	2002 Budget	2003 Budget	Proposed 2004 Budget (excluding construction)
Variable Expenses				
Capital Improvements	6000	6000	8400	6000
Entertainment	400	800	800	800
Grounds	1500	600	600	600
Islander	6100	6600	7600	7600
Membership	400	400	400	400
Misc	800	800	800	800
Repairs	5000	5000	5000	5000
TOTAL Variable	20200	20200	23600	21200
Fixed Expenses				
Employee Expenses	24355	24842	25588.29	26611
Employee Expenses:Federal With- holding & SS	0			
Employee Expenses:Unemployment Taxes	0			
Employee Expenses:Maryland With- holding	0			
Employee Expenses:Workers Comp.	0			
Employee Expenses:Vacation Substi- tutes	0			
Employee Expenses:Salary	0			
Insurance and Worker Comp.	4400	4700	4800	5400
Medical Insurance	6600	7872	5000	6100
Tax-Other	1800	1800	1800	1800
Utilities-Total	3200	3300	3300	3300
Utilities:Gas & Electric	0			
Utilities:Telephone	0			
Bank Charge	200	300	300	300
TOTAL Fixed Expenses	40555	42814	40788	43511
TOTAL BUDGET	60755	63014	64388	64711
Budget % increase		1.04	1.02	1.01

Photo by David Winer



Elizabeth ("Betty") Conant Burchell
1921 - 2003

Betty, a member since 1958, died this November. Below are remembrances by two of her many admirers and friends: Renee Dunham and Jane Winer.

Betty had a passion for finding the tangible evidence of local 19th century life along the Potomac River. She browsed through the C&O Canal National Park files, looking for references to the daily activities of ordinary people. Often there was just a name on a map – a hint of a ferry crossing, a mill, a road, a store, or a farm - that opened the question “What happened there?” And there is where Betty would go.

Messing around in the woods or ambling along the shore, staring across the river is what it looked like. The real activity was Betty’s intelligent observation. She was alert for terrain that could possibly be a wagon route to the river for carrying flour or milk. Could those rocks have been laid to pave it, those trees have lined it long ago? Where could a ferry have safely crossed the river and in what season? Betty returned to a site in different seasons, for each afforded a new perspective. She returned to the archives. Maybe more clues could be found, maybe not, but regardless, she continued to poke around. She remained open and went anywhere that held a wisp of possibility. Her treks ranged from Riverbend Park to Turkey Run in Virginia and from Great Falls to Sycamore Island in Maryland.

Betty had a knack for engaging people. She met a young man, running his dog in the Virginia woods behind the house he grew up in.

He knew every tree in the area, as kids do, and became an enthusiastic guide with a newfound purpose. She found two elder brothers through a farm name on an old map. They remembered their young years on the farm whose produce was sold in Maryland. How did it get there? She enticed them back to the woods to try to find the old trails to the river. She chuckled over the fun of it, but she really cared about who these people were, what they did, what was going on with their health, how they got on with their families... And she had a field of friends eager to be called upon to join her. She would tailor each expedition to the abilities and interests of her companions and offer a menu of locations to explore. Her companions were equal partners in the looking, the questioning, and the jolliness of the outing. By golly, Betty’s archeology was a social art!

The tidy notebook she was developing contained photos, maps, and documents, but didn’t show her muddy shoes, the phone calls, companions, chuckles, the pickup truck, and the C&O National Park personnel who loved her. Only in a wisp of a way does it suggest her humor and heart, her wealth of stories, her sensible response to challenges, and a freshness that made guessing her age a very silly thing to try.

-- Renee Dunham

Whatever Betty Burchell turned her attention to, she became deeply involved in, not just to satisfy herself, but with an eye on larger issues. An archeological dig in the neighborhood led her to American University, for example, so that the University oversaw the excavation. When it was completed, Betty kept the location secret in order to preserve the site for future study. I like to think about Betty intent on the dig, needing a place to store a pile of rocks--so into the bathtub they went! And another example . . . when Betty first went to Cabin John United Methodist Church, one Sunday years ago, she discovered there was no one to play the piano, so she volunteered. When an organ eventually replaced the piano, she took organ lessons, so she could play it instead. I believe she played for the congregation up until the time of her death.

Betty served as President and Captain of Sycamore Island and her son Ken talks about how he "grew up on the Island." Her devotion to this area, however, extended way beyond the Club. When I met Betty, I had no idea that I would soon be hiking with her and Renee, Johnna, and others along the banks of the Potomac searching for traces of ferry landings, mills of the 18th and 19th centuries, and ancient Indian fishing weirs. She introduced us to a college student who lived on the Virginia side of the river who, with his dog, had explored the old roads that once cut down to the river. Betty recruited him for her guide. She had a knack for finding people for her projects regardless--or in spite of--their age or circumstances. In turn, she became so versed in local history that the Park Service invited Betty to give tours of Matildaville, the early 19th-century manufacturing village across the river at Great Falls, Virginia.

Recently, Betty had talked about taking up painting again and going out on the canal; instead, she bought herself a camera, took photography classes at Glen Echo and began

taking pictures of the river. Her photographs, like her paintings, and the family letters she bound into books, turned into gifts for her nephews and nieces, and her son Ken.

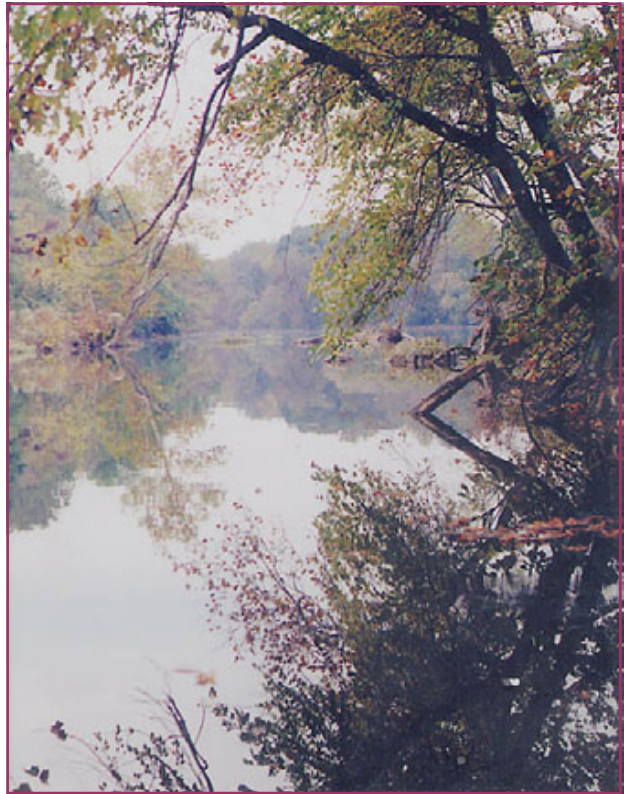


Photo by Betty Burchell

Betty and I talked about many things. I wish I had taken notes. I wish I had taped some of our conversations. She talked about her mountain-climbing expeditions, about her friend Ken and their mutual interest in computers. She told stories about her son Ken and his work with the Park Police as a helicopter pilot. Ken would give Betty a pilot's salute when his path overhead crossed hers on foot in the Park. . . . If ever our conversation turned too serious, Betty would lighten it with laughter, the better to enjoy our time together. Betty was a remarkable, creative woman who makes me think of a brilliant creature, a beautiful bird, perhaps; she illuminated life all about her.

-- Jane Winer

Fall 2003 Workfest

by Karen B. Possner

This year's fall Workfest was a success (as are all Workfests) but, from my perspective, perhaps for a different reason. The sun shone and the air was crisp -- feeling a bit cool for those arriving on the early shift -- but a hearty greeting from the ferry operator and those already at work warmed things up instantly.

Some thoughtful soul(s) provided hot coffee and donuts to keep spirits up and encourage us to burn more calories and we did just that. From first glance, it was clear that the operative word for the day (for some of us) would be LEAVES. The Island was covered with them. Really covered. Bringing implements from home and using ones on hand, about 10 of us raked, and raked, and raked -- for hours. In years past, I remember our target was making a big pile (never thinking to ask, what next?), but this year we took them to the river. Depending on a raker's strength and the size of the load, we carried or dragged bright blue tarps across the Island, carefully maneuvering through mud, then across a narrow wet plank, then onto a wet dock, until the moment of (hopefully) deftly letting go of two corners of the tarp to release the leaves into the water.

Did I mention it was windy? Most of the leaves floated away, but a good portion fell back onto the dock. For those of us for whom neatness counts (even in leaf raking), standing at the edge of the dock, holding on to the picnic table as anchor, we scraped them into the water by hand. We made this trip countless times. I wondered whether our deposits might harm the river, but each time we returned with the next load, the previous one had already disappeared. The river seemed very tolerant of our gift.

Since our earliest days on Sycamore Island, we'd heard about the famous barbecue lunches

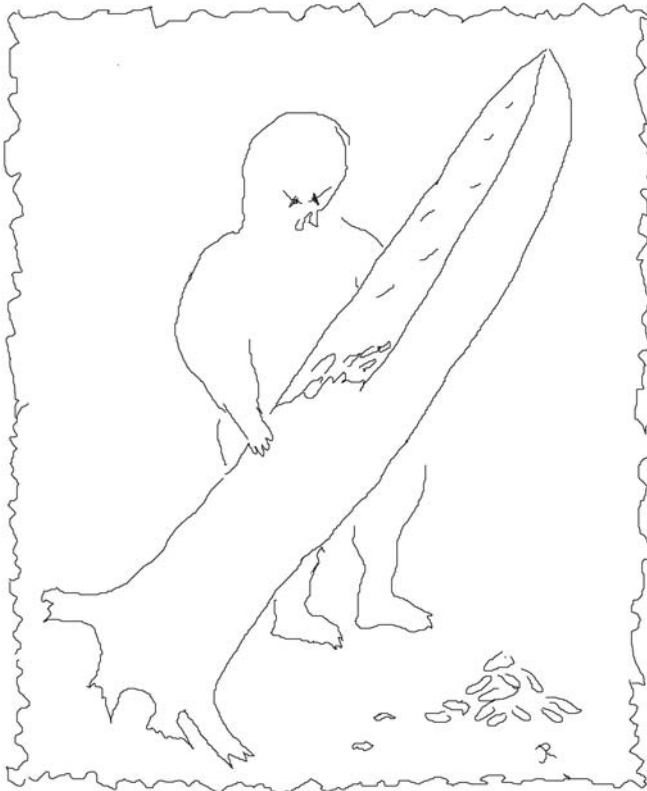
provided by George and Marcia Loeb -- in truth, these friendly feasts probably are the *real* Workfest draw and with good reason. This year, my husband (Stan Wiggins) and I were plucked out of the raking corps by Joe and asked if we would meet the Loeb's at Lock 7 to help them carry lunch supplies to the Island.

Secretly grateful for the opportunity to straighten our aging backs, we set off on the towpath for the short walk to the Lock 7 parking area. The moment we arrived on foot, so did the Loeb's by car, and we began to divide the food among four people -- two backpacks and two carts. It was our first close encounter with Marcia and George (who told us - sigh - they've been members since '64), and we treasure our walk back to the Island with them. Carrying 15 pounds of raw chicken, buns, condiments, paper products, etc. along the towpath was a new experience for us, but clearly the Loeb's had done this before and could teach us a thing or two.

Alas, we could not stay for lunch, since we had three weekend guests awaiting our return, but it had to have been wonderful because of the care that went into providing it. I don't know if the powers that be were satisfied with the day's accomplishments, but that's what gets me to why, from my perspective, this year's Workfest was a success. It all has to do with community, and giving, and sharing. We're all accomplished in our own ways, but being a part of the Island and joining with others to make it better enhances us all. So if you missed our Fall Fest, do join us in the Spring!

Karen Possner and her husband, Stanley Wiggins, have been patiently waiting for membership since the Summer of 1998.

Workfest 2003 Scenes



*Ruppert gnaws a canoe for Betty.
Islanders bid her farewell.*

Photos by Carl Linden and David Winer

Ruppert

*—Created by
Johnna Robinson*

In Touch With Joe....

Photo by David Winer



The biggest and saddest news this month is the death of Betty Burchell. She was a great woman and a long-time dedicated club member. Her death marks the end of an era and she will be missed. I will miss her calls warning

me of impending floods; she was always keeping me posted on the happenings of the river good and bad. I will miss having her to go to with my questions about the history of the club and of the river; she was a well of information. I only knew her for a short time but I feel fortunate to have met her.

Onto less somber news: The Workfest was a big success and the island is ready for the winter. We had a crew raking leaves, a crew cleaning the clubhouse and another crew cutting and hauling logs. We had some skilled labor fixing screens and decking and hanging a new gutter. The Loeb's brought their usual feast and I think everyone had a good time. It's so much fun to see so many different club members on the Island at the same time, all having a good time together.

That night I had a gathering of friends and clubbers for a marshmallow roast and we were treated to that beautiful lunar eclipse. It was so magical to watch the fire under the strange red moon with the river all around us. I'll have to host another after-hours party again soon.

Blair Bower helped me with another project that we've been working on and we finally finished the new brick steps and patio outside my door. It's so great to not have all that dirt and mud at my front stoop. Thanks Blair!

Things have been pretty slow since the Workfest; I haven't had a visitor for almost two weeks. The last two weekends the river has been over five feet and I've had to close the ferry and ask

the relief caretakers to stay home. Last night the river got up to nine feet! John Matthews told me that we've had twenty inches above the normal rainfall so far this year. Speaking of John Matthews, I miss him; for some reason he hasn't been bugging me this month. He hasn't been coming down and he's only called me half a dozen times all month! John, maybe you should get your canoe back down here. I do hope people will come down once the river recedes. It's really beautiful here in the winter and if you call ahead I can warm up the clubhouse. We'll be around during the holidays, so please give us a call and come down to the river. It's a good way to get a break from all that family.

I saw my first deer on the island this past month. Apparently not the first time deer have been on the island but surprising and special just the same. I guess a raging river is no obstacle when it's rutting season. I'm afraid that same buck was killed a few days later; the police had to shoot it after it was hit by a car on MacArthur. This deer overpopulation really needs to be dealt with.

I refilled my bird feeder this month and I'm being rewarded by dozens of energetic songbirds and majestic Pileated woodpeckers. I've been treated to many hawk sightings as well. I've seen sharpshinned and red-shouldered hawks along the canal and red-tails soaring over the river. Three times this past month I've spotted the large distinctive Bald Eagle.

Finally, for your holiday giving, I can "objectively" recommend *Rock Creek Park* by Gail Spilsbury, a friend. *Smithsonian Magazine* wrote that "This testament to the rustic splendors of Rock Creek Park--its woodlands and trails, meadows and streams--serves as an eloquent tribute to the great urban wilderness that lies at the heart of the nation's capital." Seems just right to me.

-- Joe Hage

For the finish to the saga of "How the Ferry Got Its Bumpers", see: http://users.starpower.net/rstapko/ferry_bumpers.html

Saturday Relief Caretakers December 2003— January 2004

December 6, 2003	11:00 a.m. - dark	<i>Call to volunteer!</i>	
December 13, 2003	11:00 a.m. - dark	Alison Levine	301-320-4353
December 20, 2003	11:00 a.m. - dark	<i>Call to volunteer!</i>	
December 27, 2003	11:00 a.m. - dark	<i>Call to volunteer!</i>	
January 3, 2003	11:00 a.m. - dark	<i>Call to volunteer!</i>	
January 10, 2003	11:00 a.m. - dark	<i>Call to volunteer!</i>	
January 17, 2003	11:00 a.m. - dark	Whitney Pinger	202-686-5443
January 24, 2003	11:00 a.m. - dark	<i>Call to volunteer!</i>	
January 31, 2003	11:00 a.m. - dark	<i>Call to volunteer!</i>	

*** Caretaker Volunteers ***

To volunteer for Saturday 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 in December

None

A large party application form may be printed from the Club's web page at
<http://www.sycamoreisland.org/systeps.htm>

— or —

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

EXCLUSIVITY

From the December '03 *Washingtonian*, p. 76:

HARDEST CLUB TO JOIN

“The Sycamore Island Club... is just off the Maryland shore of the Potomac, a few hundred yards upstream from Little Falls. There's no golf course, no swimming pool, no staff except for the island caretaker, no parking, no booze. Access is by hand-drawn ferry. This is a place for canoeing, kayaking, fishing, or just lolling in the river. There's a long canoe rack, a swim float out in the river, a clubhouse with a pool table and Ping-Pong, and five acres of one of the area's most tranquil settings. Only one problem: The club has a seven-year waiting list.” [Even more exclusive than that: The newest members waited ten (!) years.]

From p. 116 of *The C&O Canal Companion* by Mike High, published as an updated edition in 2000 by the Johns Hopkins University Press:

The Sycamore Island Club “dates back to 1885. The dues are quite affordable, catering to a solidly middle-class membership, but the waiting list moves only slightly faster than the one for Red-skin season tickets.” [Ha!]



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

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December 2003

- Betty Burchell
- 2004 Officers
- Budget
- The Workfest
- Exclusivity



Come and Get It

Photo by David Winer