



Joe Claus

Photo and editing by David Winer

# *The Sycamore Islander*

*December 2004*

*Volume 83 No. 12*

## **President's Message**

The Building Committee has made a lot of progress this past month in choosing a general floor plan for the caretaker's quarters and for remodeling and improving the Club facilities for the members. Please be sure to read Jack Sanders' article and to look carefully at the floor plans. As you can see, there are a lot of details to be resolved. We expect to meet with an architect soon to ensure the feasibility of the plans and to work out the details. Also, note the points raised by three members of the Committee dissenting from its recommendations, and their alternate plans.

We have a rough estimate of the construction costs of the Committee's recommended plan, as well as the costs of the two runner-up plans. While this one is the least expensive of the three, it is more than double the budget of \$50,000 that was established years ago. Since this plan includes much-needed renovations to the facilities that are used by all of us, it goes well beyond the scope of the original charter, and, therefore, additional expense is to be expected. Plus, that budget was approved three and a half years ago, and building costs have increased significantly since then.

The Building Committee has established a subcommittee to consider financing. I have three overarching goals that this subcommittee should consider as they develop a plan. They are to:

1. Raise enough funds to cover the costs of the construction.
2. Build a reserve of \$100,000 by the end of a five year period after construction begins, which would be our "self-insurance" fund in case of a disaster occurring on the Island,
3. Develop a plan that would allow members with limited finances to support the building effort without burdening them financially.

## **Upcoming Sycamore Events**

December Meeting: Wednesday Dec. 8th @ 8 p.m. at Star Mitchell's home. 8705 Hempstead Avenue, Bethesda, 301-530-3252. Discussion of building plans, election of officers, 2005 budget. Star asks that we "please bring something to share, as we will have a 'Christmas' dinner." (See driving directions on page three.)

January meeting: Wednesday January 12th @ 8 p.m. Site tbd.

***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 e-mail attachments to [normanmetzger@verizon.net](mailto:normanmetzger@verizon.net). Telephone: 202/544-6027 or 202/445-5436 (cell). **Note to submitters of announcements, articles, or letters: The deadline for the January issue is receipt at the Editor's address by Tuesday, December 28th.**

Obviously, no one option can fulfill all of these goals, and the subcommittee is considering several possibilities. We believe that the Island is so important to us that some members would be so generous as to give monetary gifts to support the building. We also believe that there are even more members who would be willing to loan the Club funds to be paid back with interest over the next several years. We also doubt that those two options would provide enough funds to complete the construction.

Another, less attractive idea is to tax all members a certain fee. This would weigh heavily on members who are on a fixed income, and it taxes only current members, leaving future members to benefit without bearing an equivalent expense. An alternative might be to assess all members a "facilities investment" fee, which would be similar to the deposit that many clubs and pools charge their members upon joining and then return it when they leave the club. Perhaps we would return it when a member leaves the club or becomes a senior member. New members would be required to invest in the facilities upon joining. And, of course, we can always raise the dues. However, this option provides the needed funds only over a considerable period of time. Certainly, as we develop the detailed construction plans, we will work on the nature and details of the financing plan.

The next meeting is the Club's Annual Meeting. At this meeting, the budget for next year is approved and the officers are elected. This year, you will also have a chance to ask questions, make suggestions, and help shape the building and financing plans. But mostly, the Annual Meeting is a fun event. It will be held at Star Mitchell's house at 8:00 on December eight. Please come!

— Ann Marie Cunningham

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## Minutes of the Nov 10, 2004 Membership Meeting

**Present:** Star Mitchell, John Matthews, Faith Earll, Jack Sanders, Carl Linden, Ann Marie Cunningham, Ned Goddard, Jim Drew, Renee Dunham, Joe Hage, Jeff Komarow, Jane Winer, David Winer, Gerald S. Barton, Norman Metzger, David Lyles, Cindy Bertaut, Peggy Thomson, Dick Way (guest), Martin Klauber (guest), and Peter Winkler

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 8:05 p.m. by President Ann Marie Cunningham.

**Minutes:** The minutes of the September meeting as published in the *Islander* were approved. There were no official minutes of the October meeting, as there was no quorum present at that meeting.

**Communications:** Ann Marie reported a communication from a couple who had happened upon the Caretaker's log on the Internet. They were happy to read it and learn of our interest in the environment.

**Building issues:** Ann Marie introduced a guest, Martin Klauber, who is the People's Counsel for Montgomery County. He represents "the public interest." Marty would like to help us gain the approval of Montgomery County for our construction plans. He is aware that the Island is a special place and he would like to help us keep it that way.

Ann Marie and Building Committee Chair Jack Sanders then gave the meeting an update on construction issues. She reminded us that, a few months ago,

the Club decided to stay within the footprint of the current Clubhouse in any new building. Since then, the Building Committee has met several times, including tonight. Jack observed that we want to work with the County, and he welcomed Marty Klauber's assistance. Jack reported on some of the issues the Committee had been discussing, and the efforts it had made to come up with a sense of our priorities for the remodeling. Jack circulated a document quantifying those priorities.

The Committee has also obtained some cost estimates for various configurations. They range up to and in excess of \$100,000 (which does not include the amount that figure might be reduced by volunteer effort). That amount includes some upgrading of Club as well as caretaker facilities. Discussions among the Committee show a preference, although not an unanimous consensus, for what was previously presented as Option No. 3, and we have a series of CAD drawings illustrating that plan (p. nine). Ann Marie added that the Committee had decided not to hire an architect until our ideas were further along. Ann Marie has discussed the issue with Pat Berry, an architect and Club member, who may or may not be interested in taking on the job. In the mean time, Dick Way, a professional civil engineer and a friend of Star Mitchell's, has been helping the Committee produce drawings and develop estimates, and he has generously offered to give us more of his time and expertise. The Committee's next step will be to come up with more detailed drawings and then to ask the Club for its approval.

Marty Klauber recommended that, after we have fairly detailed conceptual plans, but before we get

architectural plans, we have a meeting with the people in authority at the County, where we would attempt to get buy-in or approval of the concept, as well as a sense of what they want to be shown. Cindy Bertaut recommended that we also bring photos to this meeting, and perhaps show by acetate the new plans over the current structure. Marty will attempt to help us deal with the issue of handicapped accessibility.

Jack stated that the ultimate cost would depend upon a number of decisions on finishings, including decisions about volunteer labor, all of which have yet to be made. We are still at a much more basic point in our decision-making. Jim Drew observed that the \$100,000 was well in excess of what had been discussed previously. Ann Marie stated that the cost decision would ultimately be made by the Club, at a regular Club meeting.

**Budget:** Ann Marie circulated a list of expenditures for the year to date, prepared by Alan and Caroline Gelb. We are doing very well so far, having spent only 51 percent of budgeted funds through September 30.

The Gelbs have also developed a proposed budget for 2005, and copies were circulated. Our 2004 budget totaled \$64,600, and the proposed 2005 budget totals \$67,095, an increase of 4 percent. Alan reports that a dues increase for the year appears unnecessary, but we will probably have to levy an assessment for construction costs. The proposed budget will be published in the *Islander*.

**Other:** Gerry Barton asked if we could get some stone in time for the Workfest, to deal with the erosion around the steps down to the ferry on the towpath side. The Workfest will take place Sunday, November 14. The rain date is one week later. Bring gloves and shears. Tasks await!

Star Mitchell graciously volunteered to host the December, year-end meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at about 9:35 p.m.

-- Peter Winkler, Recording Secretary

## Sycamore Budget for 2005

Over the last several years we have kept the overall level of the Club's budget about the same, adjusting where needed for inflation. In 2004 our budget was \$64,600, and so far this year we have been very lucky. Spending on capital improvements, repairs and routine supplies has been modest despite the work on the ferry and the tidying-up needed after storms and floods (this also reflects careful management by our Caretaker and Captain) and the *Islander* seems to be on budget. We have seen substantial increases in insurance costs in the last years, but budgeted appropriately for them and for utility price changes. Barring unexpected charges, we should therefore come in under budget in 2004. This gives us a useful cushion, to add to reserves (which we have kept at \$50,000 over the past several years; we should begin slowly raising these to offset inflation) or to contribute towards construction. For 2005, I propose to leave a number of items constant. However, the consumer price index has increased about 3% over the year, and this will show up in some of our expenditure categories, which tend to increase in line with inflation. In particular, insurance costs have risen considerably in 2004, and the budget will need to provide for a substantial increase in this area in 2005. The overall budget is expected to come out at about \$67,100. (Next page has the 2005 details.)

So far in 2004 we have received transfers from the financial secretary (thanks Lisa!) of \$66,500. Assuming that this will stay the same in 2005, it would come very close to meeting our budget. Therefore, as things now stand I see no urgent need to raise dues in 2005 to cover our regular budget. We will in any event surely need to have a substantial assessment in 2005 once we are set to go forward with construction (which will be included in our overall spending plan but identified in a separate budget). For 2006 we will need to look at the budget and review dues and charges again.

— Alan S. Gelb, Treasurer

## Directions to Star Mitchell's Home

From Old Georgetown Road go West on Greentree Road.

Go three blocks (count on the left side of the road).

Go **Left** at the third street (Hempstead Avenue).

The **ninth** house on the **Left** is 8705 Hempstead and my house (across the street from the backside of Bradley Hills Elementary School).

From Bradley Blvd driving towards Bethesda go **Left** on Rayburn Road.

Go two blocks. Go **Right** on McKinley Street (runs by Suburban Hospital).

Go three blocks. At third block go **Left** on Hempstead Avenue.

Go three blocks. My house is in the third block on the **Right** (8705 Hempstead Avenue).

## Proposed 2005 Sycamore Budget

Variable Costs	2004 Budget	Prop 2005 Budget	Increase %
Capital Improvements	6000	6000	
Entertainment	800	800	
Grounds	600	600	
Islander	7600	7600	
Membership	400	400	
Misc	800	800	
Repairs	5000	5000	
<b>Sub-total Variable Costs</b>	<b>21200</b>	<b>21200</b>	
<b>Fixed Costs</b>			
<b>Employee Expenses</b>	<b>26500</b>	<b>27295</b>	<b>3%</b>
Employee Expenses:Salary	0	0	
Employee Expenses:Workers Comp.	0	0	
Employee Expenses:Federal Withholding & SS	0	0	
Employee Expenses:Maryland Withholding	0	0	
Employee Expenses:Substitute Caretaker	0	0	
Employee Ex- penses:Unemployment Taxes	0	0	
<b>Insurance and Worker Comp.</b>	<b>5400</b>	<b>6000</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>Medical Insurance</b>	<b>6100</b>	<b>7500</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>Tax-Other</b>	<b>1800</b>	<b>1800</b>	
<b>Utilities-Other</b>	<b>3300</b>	<b>3300</b>	
o/w Utilities:Gas & Electric	0	0	
Utilities:Telephone	0	0	
Bank Charge	300	300	
<b>Sub-total Fixed Costs</b>	<b>43400</b>	<b>45895</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>64600</b>	<b>67095</b>	<b>4%</b>

# MONTGOMERY SYCAMORE ISLAND CLUB OFFICERS AND SUPERVISORS 2005<sup>§</sup>

TO BE VOTED ON AT THE DECEMBER 8TH 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	Richard Fellows	John Michener
Blair Bower	William Kugler	Clifford Russell
Warren Brown	Carl Linden	Jack Sanders
Bradford Coolidge	George Loeb	John Schubert
Richard Doolittle	David Lyles	Tryon Wells
Bill Eichbaum	George Malusky	

## STANDING COMMITTEES

<sup>§</sup> =Provisional   \* = Safety Committee                      \*\* = Personnel Committee

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## From Holly Syrrakos, Archivist: 75 Years Ago At Sycamore Island

### Selections from the Dec. 1929 *Sycamore Islander*

From reading previous selections of the *Islander*, you will know that at this point in history, the Club was embarking on a substantial re-modeling project. I have no idea how this story progresses, but I do know that the flood of 1936 washed the Clubhouse away—most likely the one being re-built in the stories you will read.

Work on the remodeling began on Tuesday, November 19, 1929.

“The Clubroom Remodeling Work”

“... Heavy rains raised the river to such a height that lumber could not be carried across the first two days but John [Loehler] had men working until ten at night in order to have all the lumber down so that it could be taken over as soon as the river dropped.

“The first operation was to get the clubroom jacked up and leveled ...new cedar posts have been placed under the clubroom floor and the front porch. Just now the clubroom is filled with lumber, one wall of the ladies’ room is wide open and the framework of the ladies’ room addition and the new porch is taking shape along the side of the house. However, everything should be shipshape again in a few weeks and then we’ll have a big dance and housewarming party to celebrate the event.

“When the work is finished there’ll be one continuous porch running around the front of the house and the Virginia or river side. This porch and the floor of the clubroom will all be on the same level and double French doors will be in position at the old double doorway to the front porch and also at the middle of the Virginia wall of the clubroom, making a mighty nice place for dancing (better polish up on the light fantastic toe-work, from all the current talk at the Island.). The single door on the canal side of the clubroom will be replaced by a window.... Side wall light fixtures will be placed along both sides of the new clubroom so that they may be used over tables. These side wall fixtures and new fixtures for the ceiling lights will be as attractive as we can afford and we believe that they will tremendously improve the appearance of the clubroom. You’ll be glad to know that the mantel will be leveled and outlet plugs for electric candles...will be placed there. All of the electric wiring will be concealed armored cable work and is being installed by members... The walls of the clubroom will be covered with dark green stained burlap, paneled, with side drops and ceiling of tan burlap. The floor will be of maple and we believe that the entire interior finish will be such a marked improvement that you’ll not recognize the old place.

“The ladies’ room will be extended for twelve feet along the Virginia side of the clubroom... This arrangement will give the ladies’ room more available space.

“You’ll also be interested to know that the telephone will be placed in the kitchen, on the brick chimney wall... All the doors in the clubroom will of course have new trim.

“Getting back to the exterior, the entire porch will be screened... The exterior of the house will be white siding such as is used on all modern frame dwellings.”

## CLUBHOUSE PLANS

Set out below and in the pages that follow are the recommendations of the Building Committee for the renovation of the Clubhouse. Three members of the Building Committee disagree with the recommendations of the majority of the Committee, and their alternate plans and rationales are also set out. The caretaker's views are provided on page ten . This obviously is a major matter for the Club, not least in the financial implications. These plans will be discussed at the December meeting — 8 p.m., December 8, at Star Mitchell's home. A vote will be taken at a future meeting to be announced in advance in the *Islander*.

### Recommendations of the Building Committee

Our Committee has at various times over the past few months consisted of as many as sixteen members, all of whom expressed their views during the course of our discussions. We have consulted with numerous officials from Montgomery County, an experienced civil engineer and an architect.

Several members of the Committee have contributed many volunteer hours to bring us to this point. While our discussions were far ranging, when the time came to vote the group found substantial consensus – just as the Club did at its meeting where a vote was taken on the question of whether to keep the remodeling inside the current footprint of the building. The questionnaire on the bottom of page ten was completed by Committee members at one of our recent meetings. There was a clear dividing line showing opinions on a scale of 1-10 with the most important features separated from the less important features, e.g. the location of the Club bathrooms on the upstairs level was not considered nearly so important as moving the caretaker's quarters above the flood level. The charge to our Committee was to preserve the character of the Club house, to develop a plan for moving the caretaker quarters above the flood level, and to accomplish all of this with appropriate consideration given to the environmental issues and the requirements of county regulators.

Realizing that most families have a hard enough time agreeing on details when a home is remodeled, we are presenting the upper floor of the Club house in general outline for the Club's review. The precise plan needs the expertise of an architect, but we have reviewed enough well-drawn alternatives to conclude that the basic plan here is feasible. The plan being presented significantly improves the Club members' kitchen, warm room, and bathroom/locker spaces. It represents an investment in safety of the building, convenience and cleanliness of the members' facilities, and of course a decent living space for current and future caretakers. The cost will exceed the originally planned \$50,000, probably by a significant amount. Much thinking has been going on about the financing options, and several workable ideas have emerged. Much will depend on the degree of volunteer effort by Club members.

— Jack Sanders, Chair

### **BUILDING COMMITTEE MINORITY OPINION**

A minority of us on the Building Committee deeply oppose the Committee's recommended plan to turn many of the rooms on the upper floor of the clubhouse into the new caretaker's quarters.

The Building Committee has been exploring ways to move the caretaker's quarters out of the reach of floods. Two months ago it was determined that it was highly unlikely that the county authorities would allow any physical structure to be built outside of the "footprint" of our current clubhouse. That meant that the Committee would only consider plans that reorganized the current clubhouse.

Three different plans were drawn up. All three plans put the caretaker's kitchen and bathroom upstairs where the current club kitchen is now. All three plans also made the current ladies bathroom and "warm" room into a new club kitchen/warm room combo.

The only real difference between the three plans was what to do with the current ladies locker room. In Plan 1, it became separate men's and women's club bathrooms. In Plan 2, it was eliminated and became part of the main clubroom. In Plan 3, it became two caretaker's bedrooms with closets (see drawings).

Plan 2 opens and expands the main clubroom from one end of the clubhouse to the other. Though this was an immediately attractive idea to almost everyone, the Committee reminded itself that its purpose was to move the caretaker's quarters out of the reach of floods (a priority of the Committee but never voted upon by the Club). By choosing Plan 3, the Committee's majority decided that that meant moving ALL the caretaker's quarters upstairs. And the only plan that accomplished that, was Plan 3 (or one of its variants).

We feel approving Plan 3 would be disastrous for the clubhouse. It will mean less privacy for both the caretaker and the membership. The current physical layout of the clubhouse orients caretaker activities to the ground floor and toward the canal side of the island. By contrast, Club member activities are oriented toward the upstairs clubroom and deck, and out onto the lawn and the river. Accidental imposition on the caretaker by members or guests is minimal and vice versa. That optimal situation ends when the caretaker's quarters lie just on the other side of two walls of the main clubroom.

Worse than that, a real opportunity is missed to resurrect the original design of the main clubroom, one single large room that spans the length of the building. It can be argued that the popularity of the Club began to increase with the addition of the clubroom deck and subsequent improvements to the main clubroom. If this has enhanced the Club, then continuing to wall off the upriver end of the clubroom is a step in reverse. Putting the caretaker's quarters there compounds the crime.

Finally, it is baffling that the Committee intends to present a costly bill to the Club for all this work, and yet nothing in the renovation design gives the membership anything back for their money, time or trouble. Members really should ask what they get out of this. At least expanding the main clubroom from one end of the clubhouse to the other could be considered an attractive building addition, one that might compensate the Club for losing its current kitchen. It is this minority's strong opinion that this will be a very important upcoming vote that will affect the clubhouse's character, and, unless defeated, diminish the Club. We urge all members to reject this particular building proposal, and to re-charge the Building Committee to seek alternative ideas.

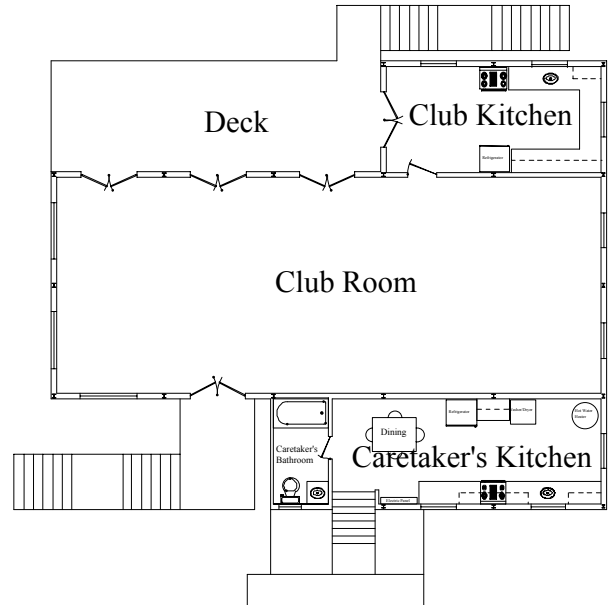
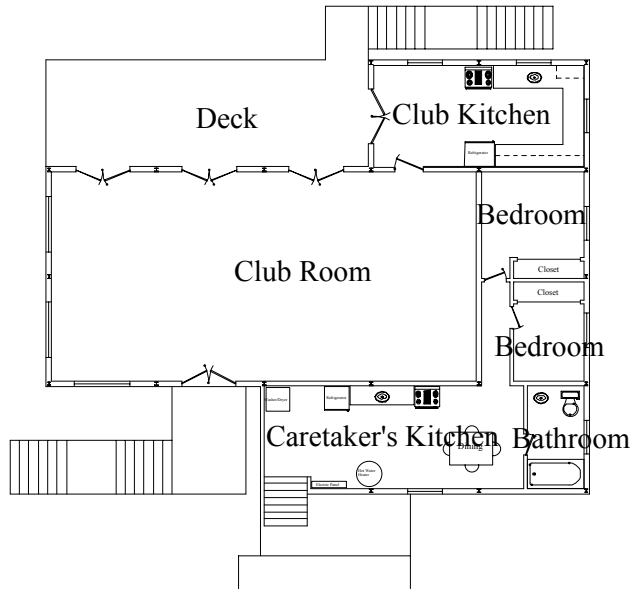
-- Johnna Robinson, Tryon Wells, Jane Winer,



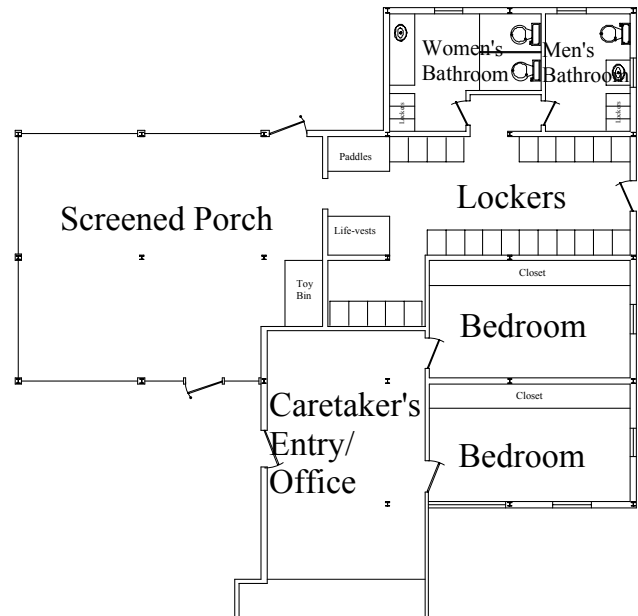
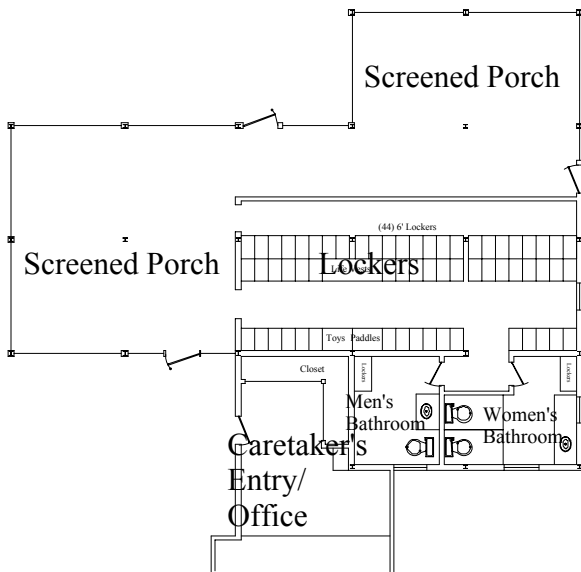
**COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDED PLAN**

**ALTERNATIVE CLUBHOUSE PLAN**

**Second Floor**



**First Floor**



N.B. While the overall floor layouts in these plans are fairly firm, specific details may well change after further discussion and consideration.

## Building Plans (cont')

Below are the caretaker's comments on upstairs/downstairs and the ranking by the Building Committee of the relative importance of various goals for the renovation.

*The main reason, in fact the only good reason, to build the caretaker new quarters is to get the caretaker and his belongings off of the ground floor out of the seven-year flood plain. I feel that it defeats the whole purpose of this exercise to have bedrooms on the ground floor. Floods are more than just inconvenient. It may be true that the river doesn't reach 16' very often but there have been times when that level was reached twice in one year. I accept that floods on the Island are going to be disruptive and will require hard effort on my part but I see no reason to add to this work load by having large closets and bedrooms that will need to be cleared out every time there is high water. Another point is that even though we usually have time to move things before a flood that is not always the case. When there is a flood everything is covered in mud. It took Peter and Holly a week to hose down and vacuum up all the mud in their house before they could live in it again. Even though they did have help from the Club members, it sounded like they had to do most of the work themselves.*

*It makes more sense to me to use the ground level space for the Club bathrooms which could be tiled and easily hosed out in the event of a flood. I favor some version of plan 3 that allows for a warmroom next to the clubroom and if there is a way to have two bedrooms that would be superb. The number one negative aspect to anyone considering this job is the threat of floods. I would rest easier during hurricane season knowing that my things were high above the river. Moving is a lot of work and is never much fun.*

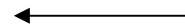
*Sincerely, Joe*

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### Some Discussion Questions for the Building Committee – Sycamore Remodeling

On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being totally unimportant and 10 very important, rate the following:

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| 1. Putting caretaker kitchen on clubroom level            | <u>9.9</u> |
| 2. Keeping club kitchen on clubroom level                 | <u>8.6</u> |
| 3. Keeping small winter warm room on clubroom level       | <u>7.7</u> |
| 4. Keeping clubroom the exact same size as current        | <u>7.5</u> |
| 5. Providing two bedrooms for caretaker on clubroom level | <u>7.2</u> |
| 6. Moving all caretaker quarters above flood level        | <u>6.5</u> |
| 7. Keeping club kitchen as large as present kitchen       | <u>3.8</u> |
| 8. Keeping lower club area (porch & lockers) as is        | <u>3.2</u> |
| 9. Keeping women's bathroom on clubroom level             | <u>2.8</u> |
| 10. Putting men's bathroom on clubroom level              | <u>2.8</u> |
| 11. Keeping some lockers on clubroom level                | <u>2.5</u> |
| 12. Keeping lockers for women on clubroom level           | <u>1.5</u> |



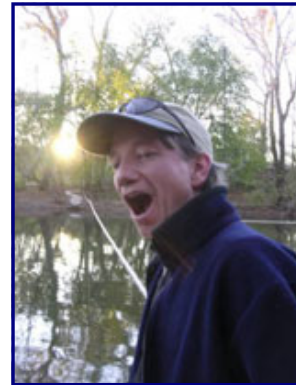
Note: Based on this ranking, which preceded the committee's discussion, there was a clear separation between higher ranked items and lower ranked items (the gap between # 6 at 6.5 and #7 at 3.8).

If we focus on the features numbered 1 through 6, the plan begins to fall into place: Caretaker kitchen and bedrooms on clubroom level (# 1, # 5 and # 6); club kitchen on clubroom level, but not necessarily as large as present (# 2 and # 7); keeping a small winter warm room on clubroom level (# 3); keeping clubroom as is in terms of size (#4). We have a plan that fits these preferences.

— Jack Sanders, Chair

## In Touch With Joe...

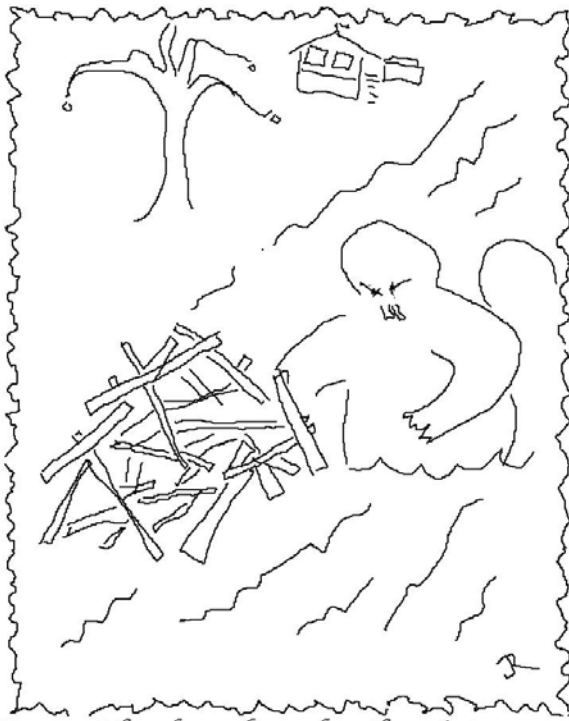
There is nothing too exciting to report this month. Of course, we did have the Workfest which most of you missed. It was a lot of fun and we got a surprising amount of work done. The big job was taking all the docks out of the river. In recent years the floats have been left in the river; but after the damage caused by last year's ice we decided to take them out just like they used to do in the old days. It is strange not having the docks to sit on and it's a little harder to launch a canoe without the canoe float, but there are no goose droppings to be shoveled off either. The other big project that day was the staining of the decks. Thanks to Dave Winer and his power washer we now have beautifully stained decks. Before the Workfest Dave and I power washed the decks and Dave led a crew at the Workfest applying the redwood stain. The momentum of the Workfest helped me get some other projects done as well. I replaced some screens, hung a new gutter and painted some of the green exterior siding.



More leaves. I'm thrilled.  
Photo by Renee Dunham

The urgent chore now is to get the trees protected from the scavenging beavers. It is during this time of year that we see the beavers on the island. Now that the leafy green plants are gone, the beavers are busy chopping down woody plants to carry back to their lodges for the winter. Already this season they have felled a nice-sized (8 in. diameter) silver maple. In one week all the branches have been removed and the trunk is now being chewed into nice, neat foot-long logs, easy for carrying back to the lodge under the towpath. It's neat being so close to a wild creature, but I think the beavers are a nuisance and they probably think the same of me.

The willow tree by the ferry landing is the only tree with green leaves and the brilliant yellow leaves of the silver maples have now blanketed the ground. It is strange to be in my living room and be able to see both ends of the island. I'm waiting for the winter birds to start arriving. So far I've seen two pairs of hooded mergansers and a solitary common merganser.



*Ruppert hunkers down for the winter,  
Islanders ponder a big remodel.*

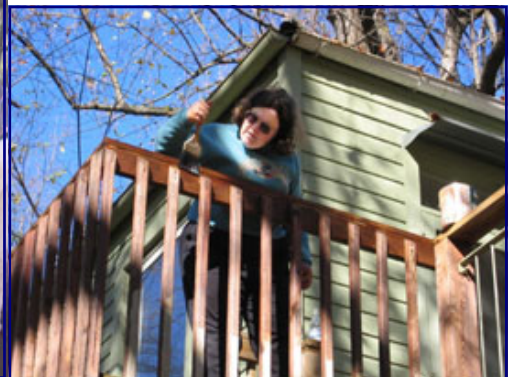
*Ruppert*

*—Created by  
Johnna Robinson*



# Fall 2005 Workfest — The Enthusiastic Few

Photos by Joe Hage, David and Jane Winer





## Saturday Relief Caretakers December—January

December 4, 2004	11:00 a.m. - dark	Wayne and Cissie Coy	202-686-5778
December 11, 2004	11:00 a.m. - dark	<i>Call to volunteer!</i>	
December 18, 2004	11:00 a.m. - dark	<i>Call to volunteer!</i>	
December 25, 2004	11:00 a.m. - dark	<i>Call to volunteer!</i>	
January 1, 2004	11:00 a.m. - dark	<i>Call to volunteer!</i>	
January 8, 2004	11:00 a.m. - dark	<i>Call to volunteer!</i>	
January 15, 2004	11:00 a.m. - dark	<i>Call to volunteer!</i>	
January 22, 2004	11:00 a.m. - dark	<i>Call to volunteer!</i>	
January 29, 2004	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

No Large Parties Scheduled for December

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@shs.net](mailto:jnoble@shs.net), phone: 240- 747-4810, fax: 301-320-4216



An Eatfest after the Workfest aka A Well-Earned Rest

Photo by David Winer





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

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**December 2004**

- 2005 Budget
- 2005 Nominating Slate
- Building Plans—2004
- Building Plans — 1929
- The Fall Workfest



Sycamore Gothic Photo by Renee Dunham