

April 14 Spring Flower Walk

April 15 Spring Workfest

April 22 Sycamore Orientation

May 5 Canoeing Class

# *The Sycamore Islander*

*April 2007*

*Volume 86 No. 4*

## **President's Letter**

In anticipation of having the Spring Workfest early in the season on April 1, I began last month's letter by declaring that Winter was over. Wishful thinking. Due to wet conditions on the Island and low water temperature in the Potomac River, the Workfest has been rescheduled to April 15, with a rain date of April 22. Why stay cooped up inside your house doing your taxes when you can reconnect with the Island, do some good work, meet new people, and have a great barbeque lunch? Your federal and local area tax returns are not due until April 17 anyway. File for an extension if you have to and come down to the Island instead. You'll be glad you did. By the way, if you can, please bring a salad, side dish, or dessert. I hope we'll have good weather and a large and enthusiastic turnout.

Speaking of turnout, the April meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 11 at 8:00 PM. ***We have eight vacancies to fill.*** Five of the families have been waiting since February to be voted into the Club. However, the February meeting was cancelled due to bad weather, and we were one member short of a quorum for the March meeting. (The members who showed up at the Irish Channel Inn for the March meeting had a great time.) Please make an extra effort to turn out in numbers for the April meeting so that we can move families off the waiting list. We also will be voting on the adoption of new procedural rules for our meetings. (See article on page 3). If you've never attended a meeting, this is your chance to make a difference. I promise (for this month only) not to shanghai you to work on other Club business.

The April meeting is scheduled to be held on the Island. Please check the website to see whether the Island is open or closed. If the Island is closed, the meeting will be held at my house, 9511 Linden Avenue, in Bethesda. This location is inside the Beltway between Old Georgetown Road and Wisconsin Avenue. If necessary, call or email me for directions (202.492.2003; jkomarow@covad.net). Dare I say think Spring?

— Jeff Komarow

*The Sycamore Islander* is a monthly newsletter of the Montgomery Sycamore Island Club. 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 [normanmetzger@verizon.net](mailto:normanmetzger@verizon.net). Telephone: 202/544-6027 or 202/445-5436 (cell).

**The deadline for the May issue is Wednesday, April 25**

## March 14<sup>th</sup> at the Irish Channel Pub

We were one member short of a quorum at the March meeting, so no Club business was transacted. However, those of us who dodged the Metro bomb scare and trekked downtown to the Irish Channel were glad we did. Members Frank Daspit and Nell Hennessy hosted us at this lovely restaurant and pub they own with Nell's sister. We sat at a long table in a warm & pleasant room with dark green walls, wood wainscoting, and windows along two sides. The wait staff were constantly popping in and out, delivering platters of food and pints from the bar while we talked and wondered if more members would show up. I was delighted that they had my current favorite on tap, Smithwick's Ale. I had two. They went down especially well with the sautéed sirloin tips in béarnaise sauce. Yum. Dave Winer declared the bacon-wrapped shrimp especially good, and Frank said the Pub served one of the best bread puddings outside of New Orleans. Alas, since the bread pudding was not served to us, I'll have to return for a taste. It won't be hard to find a time. The place seems to only close for a few pre-dawn hours every night, and then opening every morning at 7:00 for breakfast.

--Sherry Pettie, Recording Secretary

## Annual Springtime Wildflower Walk Saturday, April 14, 10:00 am – 2:00 p.m. [note date change]

**Where:** Vicinity of Plummer's Island along the C&O Canal, 2-3 miles upriver from Sycamore Island just inside the Beltway.

**Hike leaders:** RG Steinman & John Parrish

**Meet:** 10:00 am at Lock 10 parking area along the Clara Barton Parkway. If the lot is full, park at the Lock 8 parking area a half mile away (east) and walk back to Lock 10.

**Directions:** From MacArthur Blvd. a mile outside of the Beltway, take the Clara Barton Pkwy eastbound. Proceed 2 miles and exit at the Lock 10 parking lot. If you access westbound Clara Barton Parkway from Glen Echo or Cabin John, exit at the Carderock exit, turn left and go over the parkway bridge and go left again to access the eastbound parkway. Proceed one and a half miles to the Lock 10 parking area. PLEASE NOTE: The Lock 10 and Lock 8 parking areas can be accessed only from the eastbound direction!

**Bring:** Lunch, binoculars, wildflower guides, and your camera.

**What:** We will see a profusion of wildflowers including spring beauties, blue phlox, golden ragwort, sessile trillium, dutchman's breeches, squirrel corn, golden alexanders, papaw, violets, toothworts, wild ginger, bluebells, and more! We will also learn about trees, shrubs, and ferns.

### Canoeing Class -

Islander Frank Daspit will again teach his very popular canoeing class this year. The class will be held at Sycamore Island on Saturday, May 5, 2007 from 9:30 to 11:30 am. All members and wait listers from beginners to more advanced paddlers can attend. Teenagers welcome. There are plenty of club canoes available. No need to RSVP; just come to the Island. For more information, contact canoe supervisor Jim Drew at 202/462-3836.

## Procedural Rules for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century —Ending the Tyranny of General Henry M. Robert

I am proposing that the Club adopt a set of simplified procedural rules to govern how the Club’s formal business meetings are run. Attached are amendments to the Standing Rules to provide for the adoption of Procedural Rules. The text of the Procedural Rules are posted on the Club’s website because of page limits on the *Islander*.

In 1876, just ten years before the Club was organized, General Henry M. Robert, US Army, published his *Pocket Manual of Rules of Order* in an effort to bring the rules of the United States Congress to members of “ordinary societies.” I have never understood why anyone who watches the operation of Congress would think that the Congressional parliamentary rules provide a good model for the efficient conduct of real-life meetings. Robert’s Rules are overly formal, rigid and complex. The 1915 revision of Robert’s Rules of Order, which is the basis for subsequent revisions, contains seventy-five (75) separate rules, many with multiple parts, and includes eighteen (18) lessons on parliamentary procedure. I don’t know about you, but I have better things to do with my time than learn how to use Robert’s Rules to conduct meetings.

Fortunately, Robert’s Rules do not apply by divine right. Every organization is entitled to adopt its own procedural rules, and there are alternatives to Robert’s Rules.

Presently, the Club’s By-Laws establish the order of business at Regular Meetings and the Annual Meeting, but the By-Laws and Standing Rules do not tell us how to conduct meetings. Past presidents have looked to their understanding of Robert’s Rules from time to time as a guide for the conduct of meetings where matters are in dispute. However, I am not aware of the Club ever formally adopting Robert’s Rules, and I am not aware of anyone in the Club who has a good grasp of Robert’s Rules and regularly attends meetings.

I am proposing to fill the gap by having the Club formally adopt Procedural Rules, which I believe are relatively simple, flexible and fair. The rules are adapted from *The Modern Rules of Order* published by the American Bar Association. They reflect the relatively informal way that past presidents and I have tried to conduct the monthly meetings. A prior draft was circulated to officers and was made available at the March non-meeting.

The amendments to the Standing Rules, which allow the Club to adopt Procedural Rules, will be voted on first. If they are approved, the Club will then take up the motion to adopt the Procedural Rules.

— Jeff Komarow

### Proposed Amendment to the Standing Rules --- To Adopt Procedural Rules for the Conduct of Meetings

Add a New Section 19 to the Standing Rules as follows:

#### Section 19      Procedural Rules

In addition to the requirements of the By-Laws, the Annual Meeting, Regular Meetings, and any Special Meetings of the membership and meetings of the Board of Directors shall be conducted in accordance with Procedural Rules adopted by the members in meeting assembled. The Recording Secretary shall maintain the official copy of the Procedural Rules. The Procedural Rules shall be made available to members through posting on the website. The Procedural Rules shall be considered as Standing Rules for purposes of the By-Laws and may be amended in the same manner in accordance with the same procedures as the other Standing Rules.

#### Section 20      Amendments

Existing Section 19, Amendments, is renumbered as Section 20. The text of the rule remains the same.

## From Holly Syrrakos, Archivist

### From the Archives

71 Years Ago at Sycamore Island

From the April 1936 *Sycamore Islander*

This is the last in the series of reports from the Island with regards to the major flood of 1936. Despite the devastation, Islanders generally find some humor in almost any situation.

*Of all the pathetic incidents resulting from the flood at Sycamore, we think the saddest was that which occurred to one of the members on the Sunday after the flood crest. Many of them equipped with binoculars, who from their high point of vantage viewed everything that occurred on Sycamore, with much pointing and gesticulation. So the general feeling of one on the Island was that of being on a stage, or of being in a glass jar.*

*Consider then the case of the member who went down by the large mass of wreckage of the canoehouse very near the lower end of the Island and who, with serious thought, looked about for something to salvage and carry up to the Club-house site. Finally, after careful consideration, he took hold of a large and gleamingly white porcelain ensemble such as one rarely sees except opposite a bathtub. Thus, burdened, and with no thought of catching any public eye, he came from behind the wreckage and suddenly into the view of the curious strangers. He had taken but a few steps in the open when he sensed the battery of binoculars drawn to his gleaming white burden and realized that he was not cast in a very heroic role. He felt impelled to retire behind the wreckage and then return unladen, or laden with some dull lumber, but knew that would look too obvious a shift of load, so continued on his way. Looking over toward the bridge and noticing all eyes upon him, he struggled to find some way to assume a nonchalant attitude, but his white elephant was too heavy to swing lightly by one arm, too heavy to lift to one shoulder, and all he could do was to carry it bulging before him, with too much of a bulge to get his lumberjack wrapped about. So he staggered along, his body bowed back, with a heavy lordosis effect, neither a strong nor a dignified figure. To have suddenly put down his burden and walked away would have been too noticeable, particularly since he might have broken into an instinctive dog-trot, and he couldn't figure out how to leave it behind a tree and then pop out on the other side of the tree with a jaunty and carefree air... All in all, a flood is a terrible disaster.*

## **C&O CANAL TRUST -- *Restoring One of America's Premier National Parks***

### **By Matthew Logan**

The C&O Canal National Historical Park is one of America's most popular and distinctive national parks. Yet 36 years after its establishment, its extraordinary ecological resources, historic structures, and recreational amenities are suffering from a chronic and profound lack of federal support. Even compared to other units within the national park system, the canal is exceptionally under-funded and -staffed.

Around the country, "friends" groups have been formed by people who recognize that waiting for the federal government to invest in our national parks at a level necessary to compensate for its decades of neglect is unrealistic. The future of the C&O Canal is going to be determined not by Congress but by the community of people who depend on the park for their well-being and quality of life.

That is why the C&O Canal Trust, a private nonprofit organization, was founded in early 2007. The Trust brings the resources of the community—its energy, expertise, and economic might—to the task of protecting, restoring, and promoting the C&O Canal National Historical Park. The Trust recognizes we all have an obligation to ensure that the Park's natural, historic, and recreational qualities are available for future generations to enjoy. The Trust's strategy is not to replicate that which NPS should be doing, but rather to work in partnership with Park staff to complement and expand their efforts. Through a combination of volunteerism, community outreach and education, and hands-on restoration the C&O Canal Trust is working to reclaim one of America's premier national parks.

### **The Trust's Mission and Goals**

The C&O Canal Trust is an independent, nonprofit organization founded to protect, restore, and promote the C&O Canal National Historical Park. The Trust seeks to ensure that the Park's natural, historic, and recreational qualities are appreciated, enjoyed, and enhanced for future generations.

The Trust pursues its mission through a combination of volunteerism, community outreach and education, and hands-on restoration. Its goals include:

- Educating canal visitors, neighboring landowners and communities, and other audiences about the distinctive challenges and stewardship needs of the Park;
- Bringing these stakeholders together to articulate and coalesce around a contemporary vision for the future of the Park;
- Securing public and private resources to benefit the Park and its visitors;
- Providing programs and volunteer opportunities to augment and support those provided by Park staff;
- Restoring historic structures to aid the Park's education and interpretation efforts; and, Building a constituency to be a voice for the Park for years to come.

To help and for further information, contact:

Matthew Logan, President  
C&O Canal Trust  
(w) 301-270-4459; 301-512-7027 (c)  
[logan@canaltrust.org](mailto:logan@canaltrust.org)

**2007 Island Calendar [Date changes bolded]**

<b>Event</b>	<b>Date/Time</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Rain Date</b>
Annual Wild Flower Walk [p. 2]	<b>Saturday , April 14 10 a.m. to noon.</b>	Jane Winer	
Spring Workfest	<b>Sunday, April 15 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.</b>	Joe Hage, Tryon Wells	<b>Sunday, April 22</b>
Annual Orientation [p. 7]	Sunday, April 22 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.	Tamara and Joe Belden	Sunday, April 29
Canoeing Class at Sycamore Island. [p. 2]	Saturday, May 5 9:30 to 11:30 a.m	Frank Daspit and Jim Drew	
Downriver Canoe Race [p. 7]	Saturday, May 12	Star Mitchell	
Long-Timers' Reunion	Tuesday, May 29th	Charlotte Brewer	Tuesday, June 5
Summer Solstice BBQ, River Song Party and Sleepover	Saturday to Sunday June 23 to 24	Joe Hage, Whitney Pinger	
Fishing Derby	Saturday, August 18	George and Shelley Malusky	
Sycamore Regatta	Monday, Sept. 3 1:30 p.m. till dusk.	Sherry Pettie, Vicki Judson, Anne Waidmann	
Fall Workfest	Sunday, Nov. 4, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.	Joe Hage, Tryon Wells	Sunday, Nov. 11



## Sycamore Orientation Set for April 22<sup>nd</sup>

The annual Sycamore orientation for waiting list families will be held on Sunday, April 22, this year. The rain date is the 29th. This event is offered annually and one-time attendance required for membership or to purchase a guest pass. Those of you on the waiting list who have not yet attended an orientation should make sure that you attend one of these prior to your name coming up for membership.

The orientation is a great deal of fun with old-timers mingling with those who have more recently discovered Sycamore and sharing their knowledge of its history and ways. We meet around 10:00 in the morning and, weather permitting, walk around the island discussing topics as we go, and then share a potluck lunch together.

If you are planning to attend, please contact Tammy and Joe Belden (202-882-2224 or [tamarabelden@gmail.com](mailto:tamarabelden@gmail.com)) and let them know. In addition, bring a dish to share with others for lunch.

## Canoeing Downriver

The CCA Potomac Downriver is Saturday, May 12, 2007. Pre-registration cost is \$15.00 with a Saturday, May 5<sup>th</sup> deadline to pre-register. Registration cost at the gate is \$25.00. Registration forms will soon be on the Island and CCA websites. Please volunteer to help with the race if you do not paddle. Call Star Mitchell 301-530-3252 or [starmitchell@verizon.net](mailto:starmitchell@verizon.net)



Class from Liquid Adventures, a kayaking school, <http://www.liquidadventures.org/>.

Photo by Joe Hage

## In Touch With Joe....

GET PSYCHED! The Workfest is coming up on the 15<sup>th</sup> of April and there is a lot of work to be done. Let's take some pride in the Club and get this place spruced up! It's shameful: The amount of painting that needs to be done; and we need to do a better job of controlling the invasive vines that are taking over the Island. I think we should have a new sign at the ferry landing -- a big sign -- that shows we care. I would also like to see our logo on the mailbox on MacArthur Blvd., so everyone knows we're here. I need you members and waitlisters to get excited about the Island and get involved. Please contact me and let me know if you can help me prepare for the big day. There is much to do in order to be ready for the work crew arriving that morning. Call your friends and invite them down for a day of work and fun on the Island. My theme for this year's Spring Workfest is TAKE PRIDE IN THE SYCAMORE ISLAND CANOE CLUB! We need to remember what a unique treasure we have here; let's not take it for granted.

This past month has been plagued by high water and we've spent most days using the canoe to come and go rather than the ferry. The high water keeps me busy with rope-raising and mud shoveling; but at least I don't have to do a lot of ferrying. The flooded river makes for some exciting adventure as well. Here is an excerpt from my daily log that you can find at [sycamoreisland.org](http://sycamoreisland.org):

*Sometimes I'm amazingly lucky. Maybe I was just really tired when I paddled my canoe across the river last night, but for some reason I didn't drag the boat far enough up the bank to be safe from the rising water. This morning, the first thing I saw when I rolled out of bed and looked out the window was my canoe slowly floating away from the island. I wasn't fully awake and I stared at the canoe in the muddy river for a couple of seconds, dumbfounded. The canoe stopped, snagged on one of the tree branches that now reached deep into the river. I had a chance to save her! I tried to hurry, but I was still reluctant to jump onto the flooded river before coffee. I threw on some clothes, grabbed a paddle and ran to the closest canoe I could find. As if on cue, as soon as I got outside, the run-away canoe became unsnagged from the tree branch and started moving downstream, quickly. I jumped into an old Grumman and caught up with the canoe. I tied her to my seat, but by this time I'm down at the foot of the island with no hope of paddling both canoes up river against the strong current. I made a beeline for the shore and it seemed my crisis was over, but no, those tree branches that helped me before now had a firm grip on the empty boat behind me. I used the handle of my paddle to hook a tree on the shore and with all my might I pulled until I was able to hug the tree and tie off my canoe. The branch was pulling back with a lot of force making it hard to untie the rescued boat, but finally I got it free and crawled aboard. I still can't believe that I just happened to wake up just in the nick of time to save my canoe. My record of not losing any canoes has been preserved.*

*There is a stretch of land above Macarthur Blvd. between here and the dam that has been preserved as a conservation area owned by the County, The Potomac Palisades Park. I hiked there one Sunday and found amazing views of the river as well as a cool rope swing. I also found an old quarry and a spring. There is an empty house and lot up there on the down river edge of the park that just sold for 4 million dollars!*

*There were about eighty or so tundra swans sitting in the river just above the dam. I heard their coo-hooing off in the distance before dawn one cold morning and after I got the kids off to school I took my scope down to the foot of the island to check them out. What a sight! Their bright white mass contrasted beautifully against the dark river and lifeless shore. Made my day.*





## Saturday Relief Caretakers April — May

April		
7	9-3	Reneé Dunham
	3-dark	Thomas Hylden and son
14	9-3	Thomas Gibbon
	3-dark	
21	9-3	Stephen Marcus
	3-dark	
28	9-3	Joe Cecil
	3-dark	
May		
5	9-3	
	3-dark	
12	9-3	
	3-dark	
19	9-3	
	3-dark	
26	9-3	
	3-dark	

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

**To volunteer, contact Maxine Hattery at 202-362-1361 or [hattery@aol.com](mailto:hattery@aol.com)**

### Large Parties

May 25 (rain date 26<sup>th</sup>) from 12 to 3: Alan and Caroline Gelb will be hosting a wedding ceremony for between 50 and 70

June 3, from 3 till dusk: Norman and Nancy Metzger will host a play reading group of up to 15. Rain date tbd.

A large party application form may be printed from the Club's web page at  
<http://www.sycamoreisland.org/systems.htm>  
 To request a form through the mail, call the Supervisor of Parties, John Noble  
 e-mail: [johnnoble@comcast.net](mailto:johnnoble@comcast.net), phone: 301-448-8562



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

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### Sycamore Events

April Meeting — Wednesday, April 11, 8 pm. At the Island!

Spring Wildflower Walk, Saturday, April 14, 10 am to 2 pm

Spring Workfest, Sunday, April 15, 9 am to 3 pm

Sycamore Orientation — April 22, 10 am through lunch

Canoeing Class — May 5, 2007 from 9:30 to 11:30 am

N.B. General meetings are held at 8 p.m. on the second Wednesday of the month.



To the Rescue: The Cabin John FD Training  
Photo by Joe Hage