



Swim, Sun, Chow, Talk [see p. 6]

Photo by David Winer

The Sycamore Islander

June 2007

Volume 86 No. 6

President's Letter

I am pleased to report that we had a good turnout for the May meeting. We voted in eight new members (who I hope will start attending meetings), adopted a set of procedural rules for the conduct of meetings, and had a good discussion about how the Club conducts business. Our thanks to Larry Heilman who gave a very interesting slide presentation on his trip to Morocco.

We had a number of good events in May, including the annual canoe class taught by Frank Daspit, who is a first-class teacher and was kind enough not to laugh at those of us who can't tell the difference between the bow and the stern. Everyone who attended learned a lot and had a really good time. Thank you, Frank!

One of the Club's singular events, the annual Solstice celebration and sleepover, is scheduled for Saturday to Sunday, June 23 to 24 (weather permitting). Club members, waitlisters and guests are invited. There will be a barbeque, potluck dinner, a bonfire, and songs and skits well into the night. Before air conditioning, club members regularly camped on the Island to escape the summer heat. This is your chance to carry on the tradition.

The June meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 13th, on the Island beginning at 8:00 p.m. Beginning around 6:00 p.m., the Club will provide a picnic dinner (hamburgers, veggie burgers, cole slaw, chips, etc) to people who come over to attend the meeting. Also, as a warm-up for summer vacation plans, John Lentz will do a slide presentation about his first canoe trip in the Canadian wilderness, a 1962 descent of the 620-mile Back River, Northwest Territories. Talk about isolated! The entire population of the Northwest Territories could fit into RFK stadium with room to spare. John's presentation will start promptly at 7:15 P.M. and end at 8:00 P.M. so that we can conduct the month's business.

Items on the agenda for the June meeting include a detailed review of the Club's finances for 2006, a report from the building committee, and a discussion of ideas on how to increase turnout at meetings. To determine how much food we need and whether we are likely to have a quorum, I would appreciate your calling me (202.492.2003) or sending me an email (jkomarow@covad.net) if you plan to come to the meeting and also whether you will be there for the picnic.

See you at the June 13th meeting.

— 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. Telephone: 202/544-6027 or 202/445-5436 (cell).

The deadline for the July issue is Wednesday, June 27

Minutes: May 9, 2007

The May meeting was called to order at 8:05 p.m. in the Sycamore Island clubhouse by President Jeff Komarow.

Present: Gerald Barton, Gavin Bloch, Charlotte Brewer, Frank Daspit, Jim Drew, Renée Dunham, Larry Heilman, Jeff Komarow, John Membrino, Norm Metzger, Star Mitchell, John Noble, Sherry Pettie, Chuck Pill, Trip Reid, Peggy Thomson, Dave Winer, Jane Winer, Peter Winkler.

Minutes: This being the first meeting to attain a quorum since JANUARY (?!), the January minutes were approved without changes.

Finance Committee: Jeff reported that the Club filed its taxes on time, its finances are in good shape, and we will hear more information in June.

Canoes: Jim Drew reported that last Saturday's canoe class with Frank Daspit was a great success. Thanks to Dave Winer and others, we have a new rack for Club canoes.

Membership: Jeff presented the waitlist families proposed to take the 8 new membership slots. He told us that the applicants have all been extensively vetted by membership secretaries Joe and Tammy Belden, and their bios and statements have been circulated at previous meetings.

A motion carried to admit new members Lexa Edsall and Bob Victor, Ann and Terry Peel, Greg and Maia Kats, Martha and Joe Membrino, Barb Neal and Sarah Davis, Beth and Steve Hess, Richard and Cindy Bertaut, and Alex Graham and Madeleine Carter.

Roberts Rules No More: For those of you who have not followed this story over the past few months, it came out in the December meeting, when a member tried to press Roberts Rules on our president, that in fact the Club never adopted Roberts Rules. Luckily, our attorney-president was aware of an American Bar Association set of rules, The Modern Rules of Order, which he has adapted and distributed by email and at previous meetings to Club members for consideration. One practical difference is that proposals will be adopted by consensus of those present, and only go to motions seconded and voted on when there is not consensus.

Jeff proposed adoption of these procedural rules by way of an amendment to the Club's Standing Rules.

A motion carried to amend the Standing Rules for the purpose of adopting "Procedural Rules for the Conduct of Meetings of the Montgomery Sycamore Island Club", specifically by adding a new Section 19 that states that:

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

Large Parties: Chuck Pill requested to have a large party on an even day, not odd. **This request was approved by consensus.**

Fewer Meetings and Islanders? The last business to be discussed was a proposal by Larry Heilman to reduce by half the number of meetings and also publication of *The Islander*, with the newsletter to come out 2 weeks before the next meeting. Members discussed the pros (we'll be more likely to get a quorum at fewer meetings, and we only make quorum at half the meetings anyway) and cons (monthly meetings are the heart and soul of the Club, and people will forget which month has the meeting).

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

--Sherry Pettie, Recording Secretary

Phil Jones

Philip J. Jones, an honorary member who joined Sycamore 45 years ago, died May 3 at 82. Phil's wife, Virginia Logan Jones, died in 2004. Left behind are four children, including Peter Jones, a past caretaker for Sycamore, four grandchildren, and a record of distinguished service to Sycamore, where he was treasurer and also a member of the Sycamore commuter club, traveling to his job at the CIA by canoe. As the *Washington Post* wrote in a fine obituary on May 10, Phil was a gifted pianist, a harpsichord builder, fluent in Chinese, and experienced in transporting young pandas. The *Post* reported that, at age 17, Phil found that along with the driver, his father, his other passenger in a truck traveling down from the Tibetan foothills was a giant panda cub, "a gift from Chiang Kai-shek to President Roosevelt." However, no one told Phil or his father, "that pandas eat bamboo, exclusively. After chewing through its confinement, the restless cub made the remainder of the trip on the teenager's lap. 'Baby pandas may look cute and cuddly,' he told family members in later years, 'but let me tell you, they have claws.' "



Fishmonger's (Dallas, Texas) Bread Pudding Slightly modified by Dave Winer [see p. 6]

1	long baguette	1 can (8 oz) crushed pineapple
3 ½	C milk	4 eggs
2	C sugar	1 t vanilla
½ to ¾	C raisins or dried cranberries	

Preheat oven to 350° F. In a large (very large if doubled) mixing bowl, break bread into small pieces. Add vanilla to milk, stir mixture into the bread, allow to soak well. In a large bowl, beat eggs with sugar, then with pineapple and raisins (or dried cranberries, or both up to ¾ C total dried fruits—these may be soaked in rum first); then stir this mixture into bread mixture. Pour into a 9x12 pan OR two 8" cake pans. Bake at 350° about 45 to 50 minutes or more to golden brown. (Recipe may be doubled: 9 ½ x 14 x 2 pan works well. Adjust bake time for a deeper pan, one hour or more will be necessary.) Serve warm, with rum sauce.

Rum Sauce

1 stick butter	dash of vanilla extract
1 C sugar	4 ounces of rum (or half bourbon)
Juice of 1/2 lemon	

Heat first 4 ingredients in a saucepan until well combined. Remove from heat. Stir in rum (or rum-bourbon mixture). Serve warm with bread pudding.

Note from Joe: I'm in the market for a used laptop. If you know of anyone with a laptop they want to sell please contact me at joehage@verizon.net.

From Holly Syrrakos, Archivist

76 Years Ago At Sycamore Island From the June 1931 Sycamore Islander

In June of 1931, the club bubbled with summer activity. There had been a fundraising roast beef sandwich supper on May 9th, considered “a tremendous success.” A canoe trip was slated for June 14th, with a warning to put no more than 3 people in a canoe, and a promise of lemonade at “telegraph spring.” And there was a report of two trees having fallen.

The following entries also appeared:

“On Sunday, May 17th Potomac Canoe Trip No. 1 was held and the Entertainment Committee theoretically brandished large megaphones and donned long white whiskers and caps with “White Water Guide” printed thereon to join a party of thirty or so in going up to Three Springs and the Sycamore Islander’s Summer Isles. The day was cloudy and it looked as though rain would fall most any minute and the river was also high and muddy so only about six new visitors to the rapids went along in the party and I’m sure they had just as good time as the rest of us. Miss Hedges went with the party and though the river was pretty swift and made hard pulling at times, she came right along all the time. Our Captain of the Island also deserves a round of applause for going back to help another boat up a long rapids after he’d gotten his own boat up. After all, the best way to make newcomers like Sycamore and the rapids is for us to make Sycamore and the rapids a pleasant place for them.”

“May 30th a group went up the river and while opposite Plummer Island saw the six hundred airplanes go down the river. They report that it was quite a sight. The next day some of us went up river to Stubblefield, stopping on the way up to eat lunch at the spring below the telegraph wires. We had one whale of a good time.”

And now for the Fish Season:

"Some time soon the bass season will open and new and useful stories of the lickings which Dell and Carl and Dick and our other fisherman take from fish will be on tap. With these lads all over the river and the bass all under the river, something’s always liable to happen,—you can’t tell what they’ll do to the bass anymore than you can tell what the bass will do to them.”

And, finally, the wisest entry of all:

“As Brother Ackad said Last Month, ‘Come to the Island This Summer!’ It’s difficult to put green shade trees, placid green water, warm lazy air and sunshine on white paper with black ink but that’s what we have at Sycamore in the summertime and if you’ll come up often this summer and absorb your share of these ingredients you’ll have a good time and the friends you bring with you will have a good time as well. Where can you go from Washington in half an hour and find all these things except on your own island Sycamore? Come up often.”

So do it.

2007 Island Calendar

Event	Date/Time	Contact	Rain Date
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 Waid- mann	
Fall Workfest	Sunday, Nov. 4, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.	Joe Hage, Tryon Wells	Sunday, Nov. 11



Joe McBride & son Jonathan



Christopher & Justine Thomson,
son and granddaughter of Peggy and the
late John S. Thomson

The 07 Downriver

Dashing the Stubblefield Rapids

Photos by Chris Esswein

Paul L. High, III



Old Timers' Potluck '07

Text and Photos by David Winer



A fairly large, and definitely congenial, group of Islanders showed up.



...swam all the way over to Virginia!



What a great day was in store for us. Just perfect weather. And the river was warm and clear for those who wanted to take a dip. Charlotte Brewer had nicely organized the gathering, including an alphabetic by-last-name arrangement recommending what to bring for the pot luck.

A fairly large, and definitely congenial, group of Islanders showed up. It was especially good to see Bill and Lucky Marmon, who had just returned from a three-year stay in Singapore. Francis and Francoise Latapie, another traveling couple who had been absent from the Island for a long time, mixed right in with the regulars. As everyone arrived in small groups off the ferry, the dining table slowly loaded with comestibles. Charlotte Brewer and Joe Hage had set up the picnic table in a shady spot down near the swimming dock, and dappled sun created a charming scene.

Some chose to take a dip before lunch. But Larry Heilman and Lucky Marmon turned this otherwise refreshing splash into a Marathon event—they swam all the way over to Virginia! This is a long distance, folks. We were told that they consider this little exploit a tradition. The table beckoned but we wanted to wait for their return, so we all enjoyed a sort of non-cocktail party with nibbles.

You never know what a pot luck will bring out—I suppose that's where the term luck enters in. But this time our fare was exceptionally good. There really was an excellent assortment of dishes, and all quite nutritious if you don't worry too much about calories and cholesterol. Speaking of which, a number of people asked if the recipe for the bread pudding could be printed in the *Islander*. Why not? [Editor: Indeed. See page 3.]

When Jane and I were new members we were assured that although the Old Timers' Pot Luck was designed to reunite long-time members, everyone was encouraged to participate. All Islanders who can get down to this annual mid-week social would do well to join in the fun. Think of it: tales of yesteryear and good chow to boot.

More Scenes from the Spring Workfest

Photos by Marcia Loeb



Summer Solstice River Song Party and Island Sleepover, June 23 to 24

Celebrate the Turning of the Year. Please join us for the Annual Solstice Celebration and River Song Party on Sycamore Island Saturday June 23, from 3pm onward.

All members, waitlisters, and their guests are invited.

Swimming, canoeing, BBQ, eating, playing, singing, bonfire sleepover optional. Bring food to BBQ, food to share, drinks, swim suits, fishing gear, balls, games to play, guitars, singing voices...whatever you'd like. Musicians: bring your guitars and your favorite river and sun songs to share. All: Bring your singing voices.

Remember: Sycamore Island is a Dog and Alcohol Free Island. Waiver for kids under 12 must be signed; download the form from the website or sign when you arrive. Check the Website at 1 pm the day of in case of poor weather. Pray for Perfection!

-- Whitney Pinger and Joe Hage

The 2007 Downriver Race

By V. Star Mitchell

The 52nd running of the CCA Potomac Downriver race hosted by Sycamore Island was run on Saturday, May 12, 2007. To my great delight 14 Island members participated actively in the race. Our hearty member, Larry Heilman, age 72, and caretaker Joe Hage paddled an OC-2. Larry's age put them in a class by themselves, not least that in flat water nearing the finish line, Larry's exuberance somehow turned the canoe over. Both being so hot, they needed a little swim anyway. However, they climbed back in the boat and crossed the finish line as the winners of their class with a time of 01:19:11.



After the Dunking: Joe and Larry
Photo by Gerry Barton

Other Island racers included Joe McBride and son Jonathan paddling an OC-2 in the Parent/Child category. Their time was 01:27:37, putting them in fourth place in their class. We were delighted to have Peggy Thomson and the late John S. Thomson's son Christopher and his daughter Justine come all the way from New Mexico to paddle in the race. Christopher wearing his late father's life jacket, daughter Justine in the bow, paddling the late John's OC-2, placed third in the Parent/Child category with a time of 01:13:55.

John Lentz was a vital member of the 11-person safety crew that started at the put-in and manned the rapids. Jim Drew, Carl Linden, and David Winer dutifully arrived at the Island in the morning, donned CCA safety vests, and paddled up in to the flatland maze north of the Island to help guide the way of weary or confused racers. Some of these guys just may have taken their fishing poles along.

Gerry Barton, John F. and John G. Stapko (who ran the ferry back and forth most of the day) all arrived early to set-up tables and hold down the fort while Joe Hage was busy paddling the race. Joe had previously hung the Finish Line Banner, and made a large new arrow sign for the Island "turn-in." At the May 9th meeting, Joe and a team of members helped me carry down lots of ice cream and sodas for the race.

Phoebe Hamill helped at the Angler's Inn put-in, then relocated to the Island to retrieve racers' bibs and give out T-shirts. Last but not least, loyal George Malusky with cookies and cold lemonade greeted tired and thirsty racers at the take-out.

Forty-eight racers (with 38 boats) entered the race. All finished the race. The cups went to: Fastest Over-All Time, Adam VanCrack, 48:48; Fastest K-1 Woman, Marka Peterson, 1:02:31; Fastest K-1 Man, Adam VanCrack, 48:48; Fastest Solo Canoe, Dan Havens, 56:05; and Fastest Tandem, Ian Ross and Sean Havens, 50:39. To view all other times and racers go to www.sycamoreisland.org.

This 52-year-old tradition at Sycamore Island continues in full force. Don Besom, Co-Race Chair and I want to thank all of you who helped make the race so much fun and a great success. Also, I want to thank the relief caretakers, Mary and Tom Edsall. I hope to see everyone there next year! If I failed to mention the name of anyone who showed up and helped, I am truly sorry.

Canoeing: Lessons and A Ballet on Water

Jim Drew, Club Canoeing Supervisor, organized the Canoeing Class that was held on a perfect Saturday morning, May 5, 2007. Islander Frank Daspit was the instructor. There were about 15 participants in the class including our President Jeff Komarow and his wife Sandy. The class was enjoyed by all. Frank gave on-the-ground and on-the-dock instruction before taking the students onto the water. He demonstrated that canoes are stable if you keep your body within the perimeter of the canoe. He even demonstrated how to fall and stay inside the canoe. When this happened there was a hush, then a rush of concern by all observers on the dock, but Frank sat up, said he was fine, and then continued the class. I was told by several folks that they learned much. One person said she had been canoeing for years, including white water, but she learned what she had been doing incorrectly for so long. A week later another person said the class was outstanding; she hopes it can be repeated soon so Frank can teach her more. She was particularly impressed with his direction and correction of various canoe strokes. Correct technique is important and makes paddling much easier. Watching Frank control a canoe is worth the time to take the class. He is so smooth and the canoe glides and slides as if it is an extension of his body. It is like watching a ballet on water. Maybe we should have him put on a demonstration paddle. Imagine this: Frank in his canoe, kneeling upright on one knee, paddle moving in quiet motions, gliding to the music of Vivaldi's Four Seasons.

— Gerry Barton



Looks so easy when Frank does it.

Photo by Gerry Barton

In Touch With Joe....

This past month has been one of the driest Mays in recorded history. As someone who lives in a floodplain that's good news, but for everyone else this is surely not good. We don't want to start the long hot summer with empty reservoirs and I don't want to get four months' worth of rain in four days like we did last June. In the meantime, we're enjoying a long stretch of perfect summer weather and the wedding ceremony with 130 guests went off without a hitch. It can get very hitchy down here with the mud and floods and so forth.

I'm happy to report that our young eagle seems healthy and ready to fly from the nest soon. That will make the fourth offspring for this nesting pair in five years. The first year of nest building didn't produce any chicks. The second year there were two successful fledglings. In the winter/spring of 2005 there were no eggs hatched and the last two years have produced one chick each. I love the fact that the eagles and I moved here at the same time. Coincidence?



I had to get the mower out this past month and now the last remnants of the bluebells are gone. Jewelweed is the dominant wildflower on the Island now but they won't bloom for another month yet. I fixed the outdoor shower; it works if you can stand the 54-degree well water. We also got the swim float into the river but we're still working on devising a new anchor system so it might not be in the middle of the river when you come down.

I want to remind everyone on how to get on the Island if I'm not here. The combination is the same as the last four digits of the phone number. Please feel free to take the ferry over if you feel confident in your ability to handle the conditions; but, remember, if you take the ferry you become the *defacto* caretaker until I return or someone else comes down. That means you have to listen for the bell. If you'd rather not have to answer the bell while enjoying the Island than all you have to do is leave the ferry on the mainland and canoe back over to the Island. If, for some reason, you need me to be here to ferry you to the Island, just call ahead and I'll make sure I'm here. Also, I encourage you to please volunteer as a relief caretaker; it's the best way to become familiar with how things work down here and it's a lot of fun.

This is a very active time on the Island, especially now that the mulberries are in. We have many nesting birds like warblers and orioles. We have waddling geese with their fluffy chicks running behind. We have raccoons and beaver and muskrats. We have owls that hoot at night and crows and hawks hunting in the mornings. We also have snakes. One day I had to come to the rescue of two young pool players who were concerned about the snake on the dresser next to the pool table. I used a pool stick to show the snake out the door.

Saturday Relief Caretakers May — June

June		
2	9-3	Ed Tilghman
	3-dark	Jeffrey Jay
9	9-3	Barbara Kraft
	3-dark	Linda Blair
16	9-3	
	3-dark	
23	9-3	
	3-dark	
30	9-3	
	3-dark	
July		
7	9-3	
	3-dark	
14	9-3	
	3-dark	
21	9-3	
	3-dark	
28	9-3	
	3-dark	

****** Caretaker Volunteers ******

To volunteer, contact Maxine Hattery at 202-362-1361 or hattery@aol.com

Large Parties

June 9, 2007, 4 - 8: Joe Hage is hosting a party for his daughter and about twenty friends.
Saturday, June 16, 4—dusk. Chuck Pill is hosting graduation party, George Mason University School of Public Policy, Organization Development and Knowledge Management Program.
Aug. 11, 1-6: Trish Hartge will host 22 guests.

**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, phone: 301-448-8562**



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

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Sycamore Events

June Meeting — June 13, 8 p.m. At the Island

June 23 to 24 — Summer Solstice BBQ, River Song Party and Sleepover

July Meeting — July 11, 8 p.m. At the Island

August 18 — Fishing Derby

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



The Fastest Guy Down the River [p. 8]