

*Happy Holidays and Peace and Good Will
to all in 2009!*

The Sycamore Islander

December 2008

Volume 87 No 12

Volunteers Needed!

Sycamore Island is there for all of us because of the hard work of a relatively few volunteers.

What will it take for more members to realize that part of being a Sycamore Island member is volunteering and contributing to the workings of the island.

Alison Burns, who is our relief caretaker coordinator, expresses here some of her difficulties with getting members to volunteer.

Please listen to her concerns and CALL HER (202-362-6654) and sign up for a Saturday when you know you will be able to keep your commitment!!

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, Amanda Cannell, 5901 Cranston Rd, Bethesda, Md. 20816. 301-229-8658. Text and graphics may be sent as email attachments to ahcannell@gmail.com

The deadline for the January issue is Wednesday, December 31st.

Saturday Relief Caretakers- December 2008

Please sign up as soon as possible

Date	Hours	Caretaker	Number
December			
6	10-2	Joe Fiorill and Siobhan Roth	202-829-0833
	2-dark	Karl Kosak and Emily Glazer	301-589-0034
13	10-2	John Stapko	301-953-1949
	2-dark	Paul Stanton and Kathleen Hooke	301-229-7915
20	10-2	Elie and Lesley Rogers	301-953-1949
	2-dark	Drew Walsh	240-463-3210
22	10-2	Robert and Vivian Braunchler	202-291-3717
	2-dark	David and Jane Winer	301-229-8963
27	10- UNTIL 1:15	Roger Herst and Judith Bader	301-320-6436
	2-dark		
January 3	10-2		
	2-dark		

**** Caretaker Volunteers ****

To volunteer, contact Alison Burns at
riburns@att.net
202-362-6654

Message from the Relief Caretaker Scheduler– Alison Burns

I have been responsible to scheduling relief caretakers for the club for the past 5 months, and I have found that I really need the help of the membership to address several problems that seem to arise with some regularity. I would welcome all suggestions and comments to help address these problems.

I know we all agree that our caretaker, Joe, does an excellent job of taking care of the property and all of the members, and that he certainly deserves his day off, without having to worry about when and whether his relief persons are going to show up. So, with that in mind, I offer the following comments:

The first problem is that each month I have to fill a minimum of 8 slots. For each club member that I actually get to talk to, I probably dial an average of 10 numbers. And it generally takes approximately 5 - 10 actual conversations to fill one of the monthly slots. Leaving messages for people to call me back has not proven to be very effective, so I pretty much abandoned leaving messages. Filling up the time slots is a very time consuming job, and it would be so much more efficient if people would actually give me a call when they know they are available. However, in the event the time slots don't get filled in this manner, I will continue calling around, and begin leaving messages once again, in the hope that club members will call back. Thanks for your help on this first issue.

The next issue concerns people actually remembering their commitments. Over the past several months, there have been several times that a volunteer has completely forgotten their date. The result is either that Joe needs to fill in, or call around, thereby diminishing Joe's one day off, or that the morning volunteer does not feel comfortable leaving and so their time commitment is extended. Starting this month, I am e-mailing the volunteers for the following month at the end of the preceding month, reminding them of their commitment, and I hope this will resolve the problem. I know we all lead busy lives so it is easy to forget a commitment, so please write down the date of your commitment.

The final problem that arises with some regularity is that people who have committed to a date find that they are unable to volunteer as promised. Sometimes I get a call as late as Friday night, telling me that the volunteer will not be showing up the following morning. It is very difficult for me to find a replacement. The club rule is that if you find that you are unable to fulfill your commitment, you are responsible for finding a replacement. Look first to the other volunteers for that month. Only in unusual circumstances should you just assume I will find a replacement. That assumption is particularly dangerous when you have not even spoken to me, because I may not have received your message.

Please pass along any suggestions you have for resolving the above problems. Thanks so much, and have a good holiday season.

Alison Burns 202-362-6654

President's Letter, December 2008

Another year is almost in the books, but there is much to do to close out 2008 for the Club. Here's the rundown.

Annual Meeting and Holiday Gathering

[December 10, 2008 \(Wednesday\) at 8:00 P.M.](#)

Home of Vicki Judson and Mike Esch

6203 Dahlonga Road Bethesda, MD 20816

(Two blocks from the Glen Echo fire station)

The December meeting is the time when the club elects officers and supervisors, votes on the budget for the following year, and adjusts dues as necessary. But, more importantly, it is a time when we get together to celebrate the holiday season and honor long-time members who have made substantial contributions to the club. This year, I believe the Club should honor Tryon Wells for the countless hours he spends on club operations as Captain and webmaster, AnnMarie Cunningham for her continued work on making the construction project a reality, and David Winer for the improvement projects he has designed and built and his many other contributions.

Like we do for the workfest, I encourage everyone who comes to the meeting to bring either hors d'oeuvres/light cocktail food or a dessert. We also could use a few people to help Vicki and Mike set up before the meeting and to clean up afterwards. Please contact me by phone (202.492.2003) or email (jkomarow@covad.net) if you can help with the arrangements.

Construction Update The renovation of the caretaker's quarters and the related work are in full swing. As of the date of the workfest (November 23) the demolition of the men's locker room is complete, and the lower level expansion of the caretaker's quarters had been roughed in. Hopefully, the project will be finished by the end of January. The contractor has an incentive to get the job done on time.

Construction Financing Update. The financing plan approved by the Club in November 2007 included the issuance of \$75,000 in 10 year unsecured notes at an interest rate of 7.0% annually in increments of \$5000. Thus far, 11 members have committed to buying one \$5,000 note. While some members have expressed a willingness to purchase two notes, I would prefer that no member have more than \$5000 at risk. If you are interested in helping the Club finance the renovation and getting a good interest rate too, please contact me by phone (202.492.2003) or email (jkomarow@covad.net).

Fall Workfest The Club had another successful Fall Workfest on Sunday, November 23. The forecast was for cold weather, but the day was sunny, and it turned out to be warmer than it appeared. The canoe float and swim float were brought in, and other winterizing tasks were completed. (The captain's float was left in the river; the captain has plans to build a new one even if the current one survives.) We had a terrific picnic thanks to George Malusky, who manned the barbeque, and the many people who brought great side dishes and desserts. Thanks to Joe Hage and the members and supervisors who helped organize the Workfest and most of all everyone who came out to participate.

2008 Budget and Dues

The *Islander* also contains the proposed operating budget for 2009 and a proposed dues increase of 4% to cover the cost of operations. The annual construction dues remain the same. As proposed, regular members and waiting list members would pay \$400 next year -- \$325 operating dues and \$75 construction dues. Senior members would pay \$200.

Slate of Officers and Directors

The *Islander* contains the slate of Officers and Supervisors developed by the Club. The current Vice President, Peter Winkler, has decided that he is not in a position to take on the Presidency in 2010, but has agreed to become Membership Secretary. David Winer, one of our active, long-time members has reluctantly agreed to interrupt his care-free retirement to become Vice President in 2009 and President in 2010. Jim Drew has also said he is willing to become Vice President in 2010. I think Jim would be an excellent choice eventually to succeed Dave as President. However, as I have written and said on any number of occasions, it is not enough to recycle the same old members as officers and supervisors year after year. It is critical to the Club's future that new members become involved in the Club's operations. If you are interested, please contact me. No experience is necessary!! Nominations can be made at the December meeting all positions (including the President J). It is not too late to get involved.

See you at the December meeting: December 10, 2008 at 8:00 P.M.

Jeff Komarow
President

Proposed OFFICERS and SUPERVISORS 2009

OFFICERS

President -- Jeff Komarow
Vice-President -David Winer
Recording Secretary - Bill Marmon/Jennifer Glaudemans*
Treasurer -- Alan & Caroline Gelb
Financial Secretary -- Lisa Kliefoth
Membership Secretary - Peter Winkler
Editor - Amanda Cannell
Archivist -- Holly Syrrakos
Captain -- Tryon Wells
Deputy Captain -- John Stapko/Larry Heilman

SUPERVISORS

Finance -- Bill Eichbaum*
Law -- Maurice Tobin*
Clubhouse -- Karl Kosok*
Grounds - Carol Kavanaugh
Carpentry/Painting -- Charles Pill
Website -- Tryon Wells
Entertainment -- George and Shelley Malusky
Camping/Parties -- John Noble
Canoeing -- Jim Drew
Swimming -- Larry Heilman
Relief Caretaking - Alison Burns

November Sycamore Island Meeting Minutes: Nov.12, 2008

On Fri, Nov 14, 2008 at 5:15 PM, William Marmon <wmarmon@gmail.com> wrote:

Meeting took place on the Island, around warming wood stove and accompanied by wonderful chocolate chip cookies from Jan Winer. Path to the Island was well lighted by clear moon and the excellent lighting for the part between Canal Road and the tow path.

Members Present were Tyron Wells, Dave and Jane Winer, Gerry Barton, Tammy Belden and Joe Membrino, Jon Glaudemans, Jim Drew, Marianne Rose, Ned Goddard, Peter Winkler, Jeff Komarow and Bill Marmon. Yes quorum.

Meeting called to order by president Komarow at 8:17 p.m.

Minutes of the October meeting were unanimously approved.

Canoe report--Jim Drew reported that our two new canoes and 6 new club kayaks were in place. There was discussion about the need to raise the height of the lower canoe racks in order to keep them out of mud. A spring project. Jim reported that five empty canoe racks are available for members.

Clubhouse/Caretaker Quarters Construction--Tyron Wells reported that construction had commenced Nov. 10, with a crew of 5 at work most days. The space where the lockers and Men's dressing room used to be has been razed and a large hole dug. Construction scheduled to conclude end of January 2009, with a bonus to contractor for timely completion. The Island, including upstairs members' hall will be available throughout the construction period, although members are cautioned to avoid the construction areas. President Komarow reported that seven persons have re-indicated interest in purchasing \$5,000/ ten year notes at 7 percent interest per year. Club will need another 7 or 8 persons to purchase notes to provide the total of \$75,000 needed for construction.

Membership report--Tammy Belden moved the admission to full membership status of nine individuals or couples, from either Waiting List Membership or Waiting List status. They are Tom and Molly Healy; Jim and Margaret Matthews, Linda Greer and Mike Tilchin, Peter and Mary Ellen Levine, Sarah Clark, Louisa and Thy Tran, David Kay and Abigail Porter, Stan Wiggins and Karen Possner, Ev and Nancy Ehrlich. After some discussion all nominees were unanimously voted into full membership status. Tammy reported that the new members had made original application to the Club in 1999. She also reported that combination of Waiting List Members and Waiting List was now 75. (The Waiting List remains closed, as it has been since 2001.) There was discussion, with views on both sides, of the issue of whether the Island was overused this summer and whether the club membership should be increased after the remaining Waiting List Members have been absorbed into full membership status.

Work Fest--Was announced for Sunday Nov. 23. This will be an important work fest and will involve, among other things, the taking in of the floats, the felling of a large tree, the hauling of trash off the Island.

New Business--President Komarow said that the Club would have to find a place for January meeting and election of new officers. He also indicated that a budget for 2009 would be developed with treasurer, Alan Gelb.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Bill Marmon

November 2008 New Membership

Tom and Molly Healy

Tom Healy is a partner at Healy and Duke. He holds licenses to practice law in Arizona, Maryland and DC. His JD is from Arizona, MBA in International Management is from Thunderbird and BA is from GWU. At Webster University, he is an adjunct faculty member teaching MBA classes in Strategy & Business Policy and Ethics & Corporate Responsibility. At Catholic University, he is an adjunct faculty member in the night school teaching Business Law to undergraduate. Molly is a Surrogate Daughter three days a week and a Community Liaison two days a week for Capital City Nurses. (FYI: A Surrogate Daughter is a person who provides care and friendship to senior citizens with early stage Alzheimer's)

Tom and Molly have two sons. Tommy is a 16 year old junior at Gonzaga where he is an honors student and plays varsity lacrosse. Patrick is a 13 year old in eighth grade at Little Flower. Patrick plays youth soccer and tennis; he also likes to ski and loves animals.

Jim and Margaret Matthews

Jim and Margaret Matthews have three children, Jamie (son, 22, finishing UVa), Christine (daughter, 19, 2nd year at the University of South Carolina), and Katie (daughter, 13, 7th grade at Holy Trinity, Georgetown). Margie is a homemaker and Jim is in the real estate and restaurant/entertainment business, primarily in Alexandria, Va. They live in Arlington and very much look forward to forging friendships and enjoying the club. John Matthews is Jim's uncle.

Linda Greer and Mike Tilchin

Linda Greer and Mike Tilchin live close to the island, in Bethesda, Maryland. They have been residents in the DC area for over 25 years. Mike is an environmental engineer who works for CH2M Hill, a large consulting firm, where he specializes in hazardous waste cleanup. Linda is an environmental toxicologist who works at the Natural Resources Defense Council, where she directs the environmental health program. They have two children: Ross, age 19, who attends Lafayette College and Carla, age 17, who is a senior at Walt Whitman High School. Both kids are enthusiastic swimmers and canoe-ers, along with Linda and Mike. Linda and Carla were "regulars" at the island this summer as waiting list members, where they swam all the way out to the rocks and back every day they could get down there.

Peter and Mary Ellen Levine

Peter and Mary Ellen were married on Capitol Hill in 1989 and moved to Mohican Hills in 1998. Peter hails from Los Angeles California, where he ran track in the 1970s. A graduate of Harvard College ('79) and Harvard Law ('83), Peter ran the Boston Marathon in 1982 and he

can still be seen running on the towpath before work. Peter serves as General Counsel for the Senate Armed Services Committee and has worked for Senator Carl Levin (D-MI) since 1987. Mary Ellen hails from Michigan where as a child she spent lots of time in and on the water – as a competitive AAU swimmer and as a boater on the inland lakes (and sometimes on Lake Michigan). Mary Ellen’s love for the water continues in her work. She works in the Water Law Office in the Office of General Counsel at US EPA – where she leads the Technology and Wet Weather Practice Group. Mary Ellen has been at EPA since 1988, and before then, graduated Harvard College (’83) and GW Law (’86). Their son, Daniel, was born in December 1994 and is currently an 8th grader at Pyle Middle School. Daniel enjoys kayaking and canoeing and even was featured in action on the covers of the Calleva and Sidwell Summer camp brochures in 2007. He also enjoys acting and is in his second year of acting conservatory at Imagination Stage. Peter, Mary Ellen & Daniel also enjoy sailing on their clunky old (1982) Catalina 22 sailboat, moored in Deale, MD. They have been temporary members of the Sycamore Island Club since the club initiated the new status this year, and have really enjoyed the ability to take a quick paddle near home on the spur of the moment.

Sarah Clark

Sarah works at National Geographic where she’s been for nearly 30 years! Her passion is for travel, far-flung or nearby, including fishing whenever possible. Sarah’s children are grown; a daughter is in McLean with husband and 4 children, and her son and his wife are in Boston. She loves being able now to come to the island with friends and family and share its pleasures with them as a wait list member and will be very proud to become a regular member.

Louisia and Thy Tran

Louisa and Thy Tran live in Reston, VA with daughters Thalia and Phoebe. Louisa and the girls have visited the Island many times with grandparents Dave and Jane Winer. The girls are excited to be able to invite their friends to explore the Island and river with them. Louisa is a homeschooling mom, and Thy works for a mathematical research company in Reston.

David Kay and Abigail Porter

David Kay has lived most of his life in and around Washington, DC. An architect with over twenty years experience, David is a founding member of Envision Design, a full service architecture and interior design firm specializing in innovative design and sustainability that has won over seventy design awards in the nine years since its inception. David is an avid cyclist who also enjoys sailing, kayaking, hiking, and other outdoor activities.

Abigail Porter is a native of Massachusetts who moved to Washington DC in 1986. She is a writer and exhibit developer who has worked for twenty years researching and curating museum exhibitions, primarily on historical, scientific, and cultural topics. She has worked both at exhibit design firms as well as an independent museum professional. Like David she enjoys spending time in outdoor pursuits such as hiking, cycling, and kayaking.

David and Abigail lived in Cleveland Park and have an eight-year-old daughter Emma. Emma currently attends Sheridan School.

Stan Wiggins and Karen Possner

Stan (Wiggins) is a Nashville native and has been in the DC area for 34 years. His undergrad and law degrees are from the University of Michigan. He spent his entire legal career at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and retired in 2005. Karen (Possner) is a Brooklyn native and has been in the DC area for 35 years. Her undergrad and Masters degrees are from Brooklyn College, and her PhD is from the University of Iowa. Her 10 years in government were spent at the FCC, on the Hill (House Communications Subcommittee) and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. Following government service, she worked for BellSouth Corp. (now AT&T) and retired in 2006, after 23 years in its DC office. She also worked for the RAND Corporation doing telecom policy research. They have no children, but do have a cat named Scout. They've been married almost 32 years, like to travel (trips this year to Paris, Alaska and Maine), are enthusiastic bicyclists, and would like to improve their kayaking skills.

Ev and Nancy Ehrlich

The Ehrlich family has lived in the Bethesda/Sumner neighborhood since 1993. Nancy, a water resources engineer by training, is now in the midst of her second career as a science teacher at the National Cathedral School. Husband Ev is a consulting economist and occasional novelist. They have three children. Nick is a graduate of Towson University and a physical trainer at the Maryland Athletic Club in Towson, Maryland. Carl is a senior (and defensive tackle) at Harvard College, and Alice is a freshman at Northeastern University where she is considering a career in education. All three attended Walt Whitman High school. They are frequently accompanied – but not to the island – by their handsome canine friend, a cairn terrier named Eddie.



Photo by Joe Hage

PROPOSED 2009 OPERATING BUDGET

The proposed 2009 budget of \$75,617 was developed and reviewed by the Treasurer, the President, and the Captain. It is an operating budget separate from the budget for the renovation project.

This is a conservative budget. In last year's budget, we reduced discretionary spending by over \$4,000 in light of the costs of the construction project. There are no increases in discretionary spending proposed for 2009, except \$500 has been budgeted for accounting services, which may be required for the Club's IRS Form 990 and the issuance of IRS Form 1099s for payment of interest to the construction note holders.

We have budgeted for increases in employee costs for the caretaker, insurance, utilities and taxes -- the costs we characterize as nondiscretionary costs (i.e. mandatory costs over which we have little or no control). We have left money in the budget for capital improvements to build a new captains' float and similar projects.

Sycamore Island 2008 Operating Budget and Proposed 2009 Budget Inflation Factor 3.7%		
	2008	2009
Discretionary Costs		
Capital Improvements	3,000	3,000
Entertainment	800	800
Islander	6,500	6,500
Membership	400	400
Grounds	350	350
Misc	800	800
Professional Services		500
Repairs and Supplies	4,000	4,000
Sub-total	15,850	16,350
Nondiscretionary Costs		
Employee Expenses:	33,750	35,000
Insurance	13,000	13481
Taxes (Property, IRS 990)	3,600	3733
Utilities:	6,500	6740
Bank Charges	300	311
Sub-total	57,150	59,265
Total Operating Budget	73,000	75,615

PROPOSED 2009 SYCAMORE ISLAND CLUB DUES AND FEES

ANNUAL DUES FOR OPERATIONS 2008 2009 Proposed

Regular and Waiting List Members	\$312.00	\$325.00
Senior Members	\$156.00	\$162.50
Inactive Members	\$ 78.00	\$ 81.25

ANNUAL CONSTRUCTION DUES*

Regular Members	\$ 75.00	\$ 75.00
Senior Members	\$ 37.50	\$ 37.50
Inactive Members	\$ 18.75	\$ 18.75

WAITING LIST FEES

Waiting List Fee	\$ 24.00	\$ 25.00
Waiting List Pass (includes Waiting List Fee)	\$156.00	\$162.50

CONSTRUCTION ASSESSMENT*

One-time Assessment Applicable to Regular, Senior, Waiting List and New Members	\$200.00**	\$208.00**
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OTHER FEES

Application	\$100.00	\$104.00
Initiation (Applies to waiting list members and new members)	\$ 60.00	\$ 62.50
Canoe Rack (Other than Regular Members)	\$ 30.00	\$ 31.25
Non-Rack Boat Storage	\$ 15.00	\$ 15.75

LARGE PARTY FEES

0-10 Guests	No Charge	No Charge
11-20 Guests	\$15.00	\$20.00
20-35 Guests	\$35.00	\$40.00
More than 35 Guests	\$35.00	\$60.00

A party of more than 35 guests requires special approval of the Membership

* Construction Assessment and Dues approved by special vote in November 2007. Annual Construction Dues remain constant until loan is paid off and reserve fund is restored.

** Inactive Members will pay the one-time assessment (adjusted after 2008) when they reactivate their membership. One-time assessment applies to all new members who were not assessed in 2008.

CONSTRUCTION FINANCING

The Club approved a budget of \$150,000 for the construction project as part of the approval of the November 2007 resolution authorizing the construction. We expect to be within budget. The construction is being financed through:

- 1) A one-time assessment of \$200 per regular member and waiting list member and a \$100 per senior member paid in 2008;
- 2) A draw down of 50% of the Club's reserve fund (about \$35,000); and
- 3) Annual construction dues of \$75 per regular member and waiting list member and \$37.50 per senior member, which will remain in effect for ten years or until the construction borrowing is paid off the Club's reserve fund is fully restored.

The annual construction dues are projected to raise approximately, \$16,275 in 2009. The annual cost of paying principal and interest at 7% on a ten-year loan of \$75,000 is \$10,680. The projected difference of approximately \$4,500 will be used to restore the surplus or pay down the notes earlier. It is expected that any surplus in the operating budget will go towards rebuilding the reserve fund.

As noted in the President's letter, the Club is still looking for four more members to buy a \$5000 Sycamore Island Construction Financing Note. The amount of \$5000 was chosen as a compromise between affordability and the administrative burden of keeping track of the note holders and issuing Form 1099s for income tax reporting.



In Touch with Joe....Notes from his Island Journal

Wednesday-- November 5, 2008

Water Level at Little Falls: 2.8 Water Temperature: 52

The Island and the towpath look very different today. This dramatic change happens every autumn so why does it always surprise me?

I've been reading John Thompsons special edition centennial issues of the Sycamore Islander (1985). There are so many wonderful little tidbits about the Club and its history that I encourage every member to read, if they haven't already. It's giving me a new perspective about the club and my role here.

Monday-- November 10, 2008

Water Level at Little Falls: 2.8 Water Temperature: 59

Big day on the Island, historic in fact. The renovation has begun and already the lower locker room has been demolished. Those many lockers have been turned into a pile of lumber out by the horse shoe pits.

Our contractor, Carlos, showed up right on time(early in fact) and he and his two helpers made quick work of dismantling the fire trap known as the lower locker room. I don't know how many linear feet of kindling was in that room but all those lockers would have made quite the inferno.

Before the lockers could be demolished, Tryon, Chuck Pill and I had to rush to empty all the unclaimed lockers. I think there were more unclaimed lockers than claimed ones and even though everyone was very good about emptying their locker we had quit the job this morning. We built a makeshift lean-to and stored all the unclaimed paddles and life vests in there. The unsalvageable items I packed into big heavy trash bags, ten in all. I spent the afternoon moving junk around in the screen porch so that the wall can be taken down tomorrow.

Some of the lockers that we opened were like time capsules. One locker of particular interest was that of Gregg Custis Jr. The Custises have been part of this club since Dr. Horace Custis joined the club way back in the late twenties.(the bald cypress growing near the ferry landing was planted in memory of Doc Custis) I found an entry inside the locker today that indicated that Gregg had combined three Custis lockers into one back in 1990. The newspapers we found inside the locker was dated June 12, 1977. It is nice to be reminded of the past and these neglected lockers are great reminders of a forgotten time on the Island. Looking at these lockers was like looking into the past and I realized how excited and devoted our past members were about the Club. We should feel very grateful for what they have done for us and how they worked so hard to give us what we now take for granted. Decades have passed and these old lockers have sat untouched. How does that happen? It is as if we are heirs to a castle that we've let fall into ruin, and these lockers represent its crumbling foundation.

Thankfully all that is about to change, with this new renovation and an influx of new members we could be on the verge of a new era on Sycamore Island.

Sunday-- November 16, 2008

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.1 Water Temperature: 54

The construction is moving along at a rapid clip. They've asked me to have my kitchen empty for monday morning. I might be able to keep my stove and fridge for the time being but they want to open up the floor under my kitchen so they can install the sewer lines for my new bathroom. This means I'll have to do my dishes upstairs in the club kitchen, I hope we don't get freezing temperatures for a little while yet.

There is a dead deer at the bottom of the steps, just off of the towpath. A passing dog walker told me that it had been injured and the police were called to put it out of it's misery. I'm sure the police came out in a hurry when they heard of an injured buck on the towpath, a buck with a full rack of dangerous antlers. My guess is that the animal was hit by a car and the police came down and shot it. I just wish they did something with the carcass, man it smells!

Monday-- November 17, 2008

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.2 Water Temperature: 50

The demolition continues. Right now all the contents of my kitchen cabinets are stacked up high around me. I lost my kitchen sink, but mi amigo, Senior Carlos left me my fridge and stove. He also built a temporary wall where the kitchen used to be, complete with insulation. I'll be using the sink upstairs for now. It became necessary to clear out my daughters room and closet as well. You never realize how much crap you have until you dump it all on your living room floor. The cabinets that were in my kitchen are now being stored in the clubhouse next to the pool tables.

There were deer on the Island this morning. I was lying in bed this morning looking out the window when I noticed their white tails flashing in the early light of dawn. I lay there for several minutes rubbing the sleep from my eyes and watching for another deer. I was about to roll out of bed when a movement by the tool shed caught my eye. What I thought at first was a leafless bush blowing in the wind, turned out to be the huge antlers of a twelve-point buck. I quickly got dressed, grabbed the camera and ran outside. I made my way around to the upstream side of the house and as I peaked from behind the outdoor shower, I made eye contact. The buck froze and I took an underexposed picture. As I brought the camera down the deer bolted toward th head of the Island. I gave chased but then I saw three deer flying the other way, toward the bottom of the Island. I changed course and ran across the field. By the time I reached the end of the Island, they were gone. The only evidence of their passing was hoof prints in the mud and the bubbles on the water from where they swam away.

Like I've mentioned before, we could be on the verge of a new and vibrant era for the club. One thing that we need desperately as we take on these exciting times is leadership. Please, consider taking a position as an officer of the club and think about who you might want to nominate for these important positions.

Wednesday-- November 19, 2008

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.0 Water Temperature: 45

No ice on the river yet but it won't be long before there is, if these temperatures continue.

Major announcement: There are no working toilets on the Island.(except for the one in my quarters of course)The mens bathroom is completely gone and I had to shut down the women's bathroom because of the cold weather. I was also afraid the pipes would freeze in the club kitchen so there is no running water in there either. I guess I should call the relief caretakers for Saturday and warn them. Sunday is the workfest so I'll make sure the women's room is functioning for that day even if it means clearing the lines again that night.

The crew plans to have my new bathroom in by this weekend, even if it is a provisional one. Since we are reusing the same shower enclosure, my current bath has to be demolished in order to achieve the new one. They work on Saturdays too, FYI

Thursday-- November 20, 2008

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.0 Water Temperature: 44

I was awoken this morning by a phone call at 6:55, no it wasn't the builder, it was an artist friend of my sisters. I couldn't refuse her request to come here and paint but I didn't realize what an early riser she was. This was her second visit to the island and she has created some exceptional canvasses. You can check out her pastels and water colors at <http://loriannesignori.blogspot.com>. She has been doing a painting a day. Many of the river and a now a couple from Sycamore Island.

I saw my first winter birds this morning. Four common Mergansers were stirring the glassy water at 7:00 this morning.

After clearing all the lockers I took an inventory of all the canoe and kayak paddles. I counted 98 canoe paddles, 30 kayak paddles and 4 sets of oars for the row boats. We also have about 100 boats.

Sunday-- November 30, 2008

Water Level at Little Falls: 2.9 Water Temperature: 41

It is nice to get some rain for a change, and this is exactly the kind of rain we need, slow and steady.

Construction is going well. It is going so well in fact I'm writing this from the last remaining room on the Island, my living room. I've been reduced to one room, I have a bed, a microwave, a computer and a television, what else do I need? Running water right. Carlos, our steadfast contractor, has built me a provisional bathroom with a toilet and a sink. We have a working bathroom but be advised it isn't very private. It's a good thing that we didn't start this project during the busy season.

So far we have been very lucky with the weather and it is great to have the river level so low while we bring over all the lumber and materials for the job.

The second floor is now being demolished and it is amazing the amount of old lumber that is being pulled out of there.

Last evening I stepped out and found a raccoon by the door. It slowly climbed a nearby tree and stared down at me, it's eyes glowing in the light of my headlamp. I continued on my way across the river where I spied a fox on the bridge. This creature didn't seem that startled either and it stopped many times to turn and look my way, each time flashing it's yellow eyes. I expected it to bolt into the brush but instead it followed the trail up the hill just like you or I would. It looked back one more time before it disappeared over the crest of the hill.

-Joe Hage

From Holly Syrrakos, Island Archivist

76 Years Ago

From the December 1932 Sycamore Islander

There's still a chill in the air here in Washington and in 1932, Sycamoreans were settling in for the winter. Committee appointments were made, dues notices posted, and the annual oyster roast took place. Members were also spending time outdoors.

"Winter Sports, Including Hornet Heckling"

"The winter sport season has quite definitely settled down upon Sycamore. We [a group of members] were standing on the tennis court when we spied two hornets nests in the bare trees overhead. Instantly, there was talk of how the nests might be shot down with a rifle and your editor was immediately agog in his efforts to have a rifle brought to the Island instanter, recalling the great news story we got out of the last attempt to shoot a hornet's nest from a tree. (Close readers of this periodical will recall that we wasted a whole box of shotgun ammunition without bringing down the nest—the net result of the gunplay being to bring county cops to the Island on an alarm of gang warfare sent in by nervous inhabitants of the nearby county.)."

Just a reminder that the water is cold out there these days, so take care to stay in the boats and on the ferry.

"Our Caretaker Gets His Crowbar"

"Pete, our caretaker, was trying to get a log out of the water on the coldest day in November when the crowbar suddenly slipped and both Pete and the crowbar went into the good old Potomac. Pete climbed out of the water but then jumped in again to get the crowbar, apparently not being familiar with the fine old Sycamore tradition that a crowbar that falls in the wintry Potomac is just a crowbar that we used to own. So many crowbars have fallen overboard during winter woodfests that last August the famous Henley-Decker-Gessford Crowbar Salvaging Expedition was formed and the three young lady members of the expedition and your editor peered down into the waters all about Upper Sycamore in the hope of seeing an old familiar crowbar. Our search was fruitless and now Pete has practically ruined next year's hunting season."

The winter holidays are close at hand—enjoy them. And, don't forget the peace and beauty of Sycamore Island in winter.

Book– “Great Falls and Mather Gorge” by Roy Sewall

My new coffee table photography book is coming out soon! I have seen preliminary samples, and am very excited about the book. Here is the description from the book’s jacket:

“Great Falls and Mather Gorge is the definitive, in-depth look at the spectacular Great Falls area on the Potomac River, including the two adjacent National Parks: Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park in Maryland and Great Falls Park in Virginia. What makes the book unique is that it concentrates on just one square mile – a half-mile wide swath along two miles of the river. This wilderness area is a diverse wonderland of river scenery, complete with rare plant life, wildlife, historic structures, world-class whitewater paddling, rock-climbing, and other recreational activities. All of this is easily accessible to people in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. Whether you are a long-time visitor to Great Falls or a newcomer, the photographs, map, text, and captions will educate, surprise, and inspire you.”

Regretfully, due to printing delays, the book will not arrive until early January.

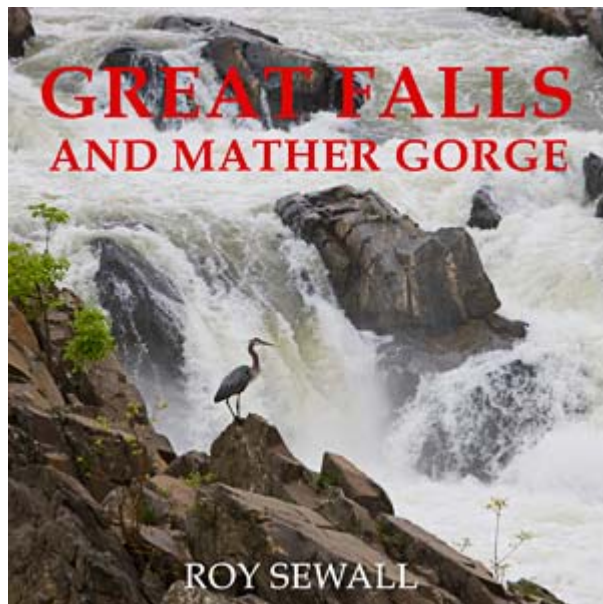
The book is still a great holiday gift, so I’m going to go ahead and take orders. When you buy Great Falls and Mather Gorge direct from me, I sell them almost 20% off list price. I’ll also provide an additional \$5 holiday discount if your order is received in November or December. Your check will not be cashed until I ship you the book, which I expect to do in January. If the book is intended as a holiday gift for someone else, I’ll send a gift card to you to give that person. The card has a picture of the book’s cover and it reads:

Email me to place an order.

My first book, Our Potomac, continues to be available direct from me at 20% off list price, with an additional \$6 holiday discount if your order is received in November or December.

Thanks for your interest!

Roy Sewall
5619 Oak Place, Bethesda, MD 20817
(301) 530-6720
roy@sewallinc.com



Sycamore Bulletin Board:

December Meeting:

Annual Meeting and Holiday Gathering

[December 10, 2008 \(Wednesday\) at 8:00 P.M.](#)

Home of Vicki Judson and Mike Esch

6203 Dahlonga Road Bethesda, MD 20816

(Two blocks from the Glen Echo fire station)

Hosts For January- April Meetings needed:

We need members who are willing to host one of the off-island meetings. Please contact Jeff Komarow at 202-492-2003 or jkomarow@gmail.com if you are willing to host a meeting.

Large Parties: No Large parties reported

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





The Sycamore Islander
6613 80th Place
Cabin John, MD 20818
ADDRESS SERVICES REQUESTED

<http://www.sycamoreisland.org>

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

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

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Sycamore Events

Holiday Gathering!

December Meeting : Wednesday,
December 10th at 8PM

Home of Vicki Judson and Mike Esch
6203 Dahlonga Road Bethesda, MD
20816

See details of what to bring in the presidents letter.



Ice Sculpture by Scottish artist, Andy Goldsworthy