

The Sycamore Islander

MAY 2010 | VOLUME 89 NUMBER 5

President's Letter

At the top of the alert list this month is our upcoming 125th Anniversary and Clubhouse Renovation Party this coming Saturday, May 8. It is a major milestone for the club that you won't want to miss. As previously stated, the affair is *RSVP* (so the planners can prepare for amounts of consumables). If you haven't already signed up for the party, you must hurry.

For some reason the turnout at the spring workfest was not up to our usual expectations. Still, there were many willing hands, and an amazing amount of work accomplished. Too many projects to mention here, but some of the major ones were repairing the canal bank next to the steps, and disposing of huge piles of debris left by the spring floods. These jobs required much physical labor. And of course when it comes to physical labor we must acknowledge the effort in getting the docks back in the river—that crew stayed late into the day to see the docks afloat and secured.



Spring Workfest.

DAVID WINER

John Parrish and R. G. Steinman led a truly wonderful spring wild flower walk on Cabin John Island for the club. As always, their deep knowledge of all the species of flora greatly added to our enjoyment. If you haven't gone with them, you must next year.

We're having our first club-sponsored bicycle ride on May 16. It happens that a lot of us cycle for recreation. This event provides an opportunity for these members to have some fun and get to know each other better on the trail and the Island. Kids of all ages are welcome. Marianne Ross, who usually rides to Sycamore Island on her bike, will show the way. Depending on the response, we may plan another ride in the fall. See the announcement in this issue of the newsletter.

Another reminder: Frank Daspit will hold his canoeing instruction class for the club on May 15. Anyone can benefit from Frank's patient guidance about canoe handling, but newer members will not want to miss this opportunity.

As noted in the April minutes, there will be several items to vote on during the May meeting. I hope these matters will attract a significant number of members to attend so many voices will be heard. We have recently inducted quite a few new members whom I especially urge to come down to the Island for this meeting. As Chair, I promise to keep things orderly and moving along so we won't get bogged down in tiresome discussions. **The Wednesday, May 12, meeting starts at 8:00 p.m. in the clubhouse**, and you may want to come early enough to enjoy the Island's amenities and have a picnic supper. As usual, the grills will be available.

DAVID WINER
President

Minutes for the April 14 Meeting

Attendees: Caroline Gelb, Alan Gelb, Nell Hennessy, Peter Levine, John Membrino, Peter Winkler, Jane Winer, Chuck Pill, Philip Ross, Marianne Ross, Gerry Barton, Drew Walsh, Frank Daspit, Jim Drew, Ned Goddard, Dave Winer, Joe Hage, Ann Marie Cunningham

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 8:10 by our president Dave Winer. He thanked Judy Lentz for taking the minutes last month in the absence of a secretary. The minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report: Alan Gelb reported that the Club had submitted its annual 990 report for 2010 and that this was available if members wished to see it.

Financial Report: Our financial secretary Lisa Kliefoth has been very active in handling the dues lately, as members have been paying their annual dues. She has recommended that some terms used to describe classes of membership be changed to be more descriptive and less confusing. She recommends the changes listed in the box below. A vote will be taken on these proposed changes at the next meeting.

Caretaker's Report: The workfest is scheduled for Sunday, April 18. The captain emailed a list of tasks that need to be completed. He would like to have volunteers to be the lead for tasks. Gerry Barton will be the lead on filling in the hole by the steps. It was suggested that a tree or other plant that likes wet feet be planted there to help hold the soil. Drew Walsh will check with the Park Service to see if that would be permissible.

Membership: Peter Winkler presented a list of twelve candidates for membership (not eleven as he erroneously enumerated on the bios.) They, and the members who served as references, are:

B. Thomas Mansbach, *referred by Sally Herman and Richard and Judy Edelson*

Patty and David Whitnah, *referred by Susan Weiss and Carol Beehler*

Betty-Chia Karro and Hank Gassner, *referred by Emily Glazer and Renee Dunham*

David and Emily Powell, *referred by Tryon Wells and Nell Hennessy*

Tanya and Geoffrey Cook, *referred by Rosalie Fedoruk and Peter Winkler*

John and Renee Butler, *referred by Vicky Judson and Mike Esch*

Marc Bergeron and Dot Proctor, *referred by Penny Doolittle and David & Jane Winer*

Mark Friedrichs and Julie Saulnier, *referred by John Membrino and Carole Trippe*

Meg and Charlie Jones, *referred by Tom Healy and David and Jane Winer*

Richard and Alison Burns, *referred by Dana Boyd and Peter Winkler*

Lisa Hemmer and Christopher Savage, *referred by Dana Boyd and Carol Beehler*

Ned Goddard, *referred by Dave Winer, Ann Marie Cunningham and Tryon Wells*

The reaction of the Waiting List members (who now will never get to be Provisional members) was ecstasy. Some expressed regret that it occurred after their chil-

Recommendation	Current	Requirements
Emeritus member*	Senior	A regular member who has maintained that status for 20 years or more.
Provisional member***	Waiting List member	
Candidates for Membership	Applicants on the waiting list	
Annual pass**	Waiting List Passes	An applicant who has been on the waiting list for a minimum of 3 years (with exceptions) and has attended a club orientation may request a pass.

* This would be a change to the By-Laws, which requires the support of two-thirds of the members present and eligible to vote.

** This would be a change to the Standing Rules, which requires the support of a majority of the members present and eligible to vote at any regular or special meeting.

*** This would be a change to the Procedural Rules, and may be changed in the same manner as the Standing Rules.



DAVID WINER

Jack-in-the-Pulpit

dren had grown. Many of them have been actively involved with supporting the Club, particularly Ned Goddard (renovation of the club house), Alison Burns (relief caretaking), and Mark Friedrichs (saving our canoes from floods & caretaking).

All were accepted into membership unanimously!

There will be additional new members admitted at the next meeting.

For those on the waiting list hoping to become members soon, you must attend an orientation before being admitted. The next one is planned for April 25.

It is time to lift the freeze on accepting applicants. Peter Winkler will be leading a committee to develop a plan that will be in place before the end of the year, as it is anticipated that we will be accepting new members

not currently on the waiting list in 2012. Our former president Jeff Komarow reported that there are 35 waiting list members as of last month, with an expectation of accepting 19 by the end of this year (now 23 as 12 were just accepted.) If you are interested in determining criteria for accepting new members, please contact Peter.

Canoe Report: John Membrino reported that there was a wonderful response to the request to help with protecting the canoes before the flood, and an excellent response to helping return the canoes to the racks. It was wonderful to see a lot of new faces helping. As of Friday, there were 15 unoccupied racks. Presumably, the canoes were removed for the winter. There are also a number of unidentified canoes and kayaks on the ground. Canoes that are not identified or claimed may be auctioned.

Frank Daspit will be providing instruction on canoeing on May 15. Frank is an excellent instructor from whom anyone with any level of expertise could benefit.

Anniversary Party: Jane Winer and Caroline Gelb have planned an exciting event on May 8. Reptiles Alive! will be providing entertainment (with the help of Walt Whitman students who will help to bring them to the Island, courtesy of Drew Walsh.) Janine Smith will be calling dances, beginning at 7:00. Dave Winer will be providing a pulled pork barbecue to supplement the pot luck donations, with the help of St. George Malusky. There will be a Treasure Hunt and games for children and adults. Costumes reminiscent of 1885 are encouraged. A commemorative bandanna (courtesy of the Club, designed by Dave Winer) and T-shirts (on sale with reimbursable funding provided by Nell Hennessy and Frank Daspit) will be available. A cookbook of pot luck contributions is planned, so bring your recipes! Historical photos will be displayed.

New Business: Nell Hennessy is proposing a change to the Standing Rules that will allow members to bring their leashed and supervised dog to the Island when serving as relief caretaker. This will be voted upon at the next meeting and requires the support of a majority of the members present and eligible to vote.

Adjournment: The lively and entertaining meeting was adjourned with a promise of more on May 12.

ANNE MARIE CUNNINGHAM
Secretary

Canoeing Class

The club will offer canoeing instruction again this spring for members and wait listers thanks to Frank Daspit, who once again has generously volunteered to lead the class. Mark your calendars now—the class will be held at the island May 15 from 10 to noon. Paddlers with all levels of experience are welcome, and club canoes will be available. Frank will go over basic paddling techniques, how to enter a canoe properly, hazards of canoeing at the Island and, time permitting, other topics such as rescue techniques and equipment. This is a great opportunity to learn how to make your river excursions safe and enjoyable. For more information, contact canoe supervisor John Membrino at 301.229.1154.



Please contact Alison Burns, riburns@att.net, to volunteer for relief caretaking during the month of July (June is already filled). In particular, the July 4th weekend is usually very difficult to fill. Club members who initiate emails are greatly appreciated. Thank you!

Canoe and Kayak Storage

We are sorting out rack assignments in the canoe shed. If you have been assigned a slot but no longer keep your canoe or kayak on the island, or have one in the shed that you no longer use, please contact canoe supervisor John Membrino at 301.229.1154 or johnmembrino@verizon.net. There are also a number of orphan canoes and kayaks on the ground. All canoes and kayaks kept on the island must have an assigned space in the shed. If you are uncertain whether you have an assigned rack in the shed, or if you are the owner of one of the craft listed below that are outside the shed, please contact the canoe supervisor. A reasonable effort will be made to identify the owners; after that, unauthorized canoes and kayaks left on the island will be auctioned off or disposed of.

Grumman Mooskamoo; American Fiberlite birch-style; green Coleman (Backyard Boats decal); green Liquid Logic kayak; yellow Perception kayak; red Mainstream Streak kayak; black kayak (no markings); green Discovery 158; red Phoenix 58; white aluminum canoe—DR PANGLOS; blue/white kayak MD 8669 V; aluminum Moker Craft; Cobra Navigator kayak; red Perception Swiftly kayak; blue/green Mainstream Fiesta kayaks—two.

Saturday Relief Caretakers **May 2010**

	10 A.M.–3 P.M.	3 P.M.–DARK
MAY 1	Silvija Strikis and Miguel Browne 703.748.4671 sstrikis@khhte.com	Fred Wright and Catherine Siebert 301.229.7184 fredwwright@yahoo.com
MAY 8	Richard and Cindy Bertaut 301.320.7076 rbertaut@ibb.gov	James Hess and Betsy Cody 703.522.6788 Codyhess1@verizon.net
MAY 15	Gavin Bloch 301.320.0060 Claire@blochfam.com	Russell Sturm and Michele McNally 301.986.1887 Mcsturm5@verizon.net
MAY 22	Paul Stanton and Kathleen Hooke 301.229.7915 paulkath@comcast.net	Wayne Limberg 703.522.8639 wplimberg@aol.com
MAY 29	Rosemary Hart 202.244.5967 hartiscoe@erols.com	Pat Barry 301.229.9122 hpbarry@aol.com



Come with us on the
**Spring
Bike
Ride!**

Sunday • May 16 • 10 a.m.

For the many club members who enjoy bicycling, this round trip ride is suitable for everyone, including children, especially children! A picnic lunch will be provided by the Club. The ride will be led by long-time member and cyclist, Marianne Ross.

Schedule: The ride will begin at the parking lot on MacArthur Boulevard across from the Sycamore Store and continue along the bike path to Old Angler's Inn, cross over to the C&O Canal towpath, and ride to the Sycamore Island ferry. A lunch of sandwiches, fruit, and lemonade will be served on the Island. After lunch, riders will continue along the towpath to Lock 6, cross the Clara Barton Parkway and ride through Brookmont to MacArthur Boulevard, riding along the path back to the starting point.

To provide lunch we need to know who's coming. Please rsvp Marianne at 301.229.6690 or cinthec@verizon.net by May 15.

Notes from the Island

Friday, April 2, 2010

Water Level at Little Falls: 5.8 Water Temperature: 52

I hate to tell you this, but the ferry will be closed today. It's too bad that the river is still so high on such a beautiful day.

The other bad news is that the ferry will be closed again tomorrow.

Maybe by Easter Sunday I'll have the ferry running again.

Saturday, April 3, 2010

Water Level at Little Falls: 5.3 Water Temperature: 52

Bad news, the ferry is closed again today. The good news is that it will be running tomorrow.

Happy Easter!

Sunday, April 4, 2010

Water Level at Little Falls: 5.0 Water Temperature: 60

Finally we had a beautiful day and the ferry was running! There was quite a bit of activity on the Island today and it was great to see some familiar faces down here. Some brave souls even went swimming today! Awesome!

The bluebells are almost at their peak now after three very warm days. The redbud tree near the captain's float is blooming as well, as are the dutchman's britches, the trilliums and the trout lilies.

There is only one goose nest that I have seen so far, I'm afraid that the timing of the flood put some of these nesting geese out of business. There are a few nests on Rupperts I think, if you want to check them out.

We untied the picnic tables today and freed them from the piles of logs and other flood debris. Instead of hauling all the flood debris into the woods I decided make a fire on the spot and burn it. Worked great.

There is a chick in the eagles nest!! Our hardy eagles have managed to hatch at least one chick despite all of the snow and flooding of the past two months. Too bad that that new mansion down there has installed a whole bunch of flood lights.

Thursday, April 5, 2010

Water Level at Little Falls: 4.3 Water Temperature: 68

This is it! If you only come down to Sycamore Island one day out of the year you have to make sure that you

do it during this weekend. The river level is down and the ferry is open. The water is warming up making it safe for canoeing. The mud has turned to dry sand and, most importantly, the bluebells are at their peak! It is truly miraculous, last month the Island was covered in water and mud, the month before that the Island was covered in two feet of snow and now, we have an Island covered in blue flowers!

I won't be here this weekend to enjoy it but I will be back Monday.

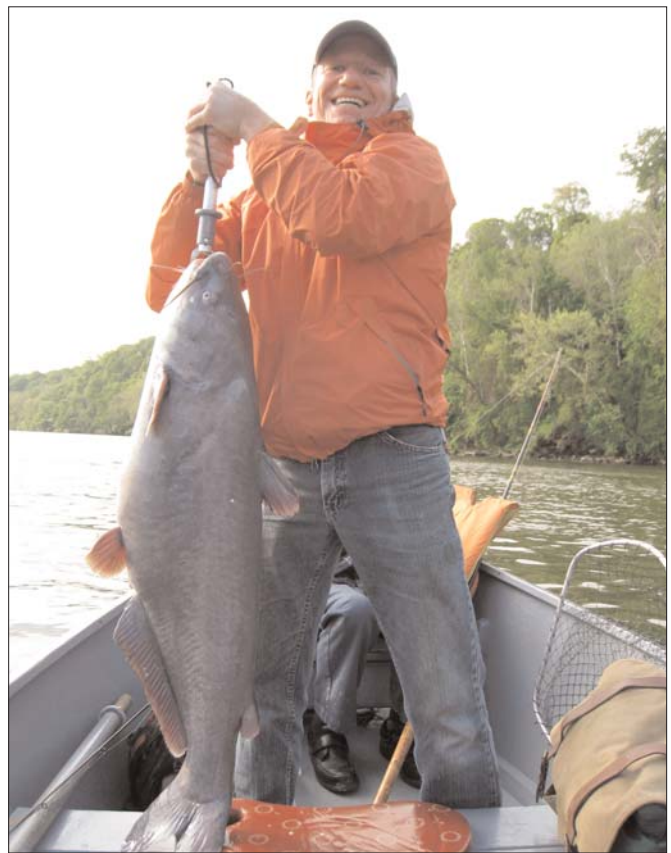
Tuesday, April 13, 2010

Water Level at Little Falls: 4.0 Water Temperature: 62

Spring is exploding down here!! The trees are budding, the flowers are blooming, and the birds—the birds are nesting everywhere and filling the air with their joyous song. The sun is passing through the new leaves and casting it's soft yellow-green light on the bluebells as they are pollinated by the monarch butterflies—Eden. Then, before you know it, spring is over.

Robert Frost said it better than I.

Nature's first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold,
Her early leaf's a flower;



36-pound catfish, caught near Fletcher's Boathouse.

GEORGE MALUSKY



JOE HAGE

Monarch butterfly on bluebells.

But only so an hour.
Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing gold can stay.

Tuesday, April 20, 2010

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.7 Water Temperature: 63

We had another successful workfest here on Sunday. The consensus was that it was a much smaller crew than we've had in the recent past but I think we made up for the low numbers with high enthusiasm. We had a crew fixing the towpath and we had a crew cutting up giant timbers and we had a crew preparing a feast for lunch time. I think everyone enjoyed having the large bon fire and I've decided to have a fire at every workfest, just as a crowd pleaser. The two fires that we had also made quick work of getting rid of all the flood debris and fallen trees. We burned so much wood that the coals were still hot this morning, almost 48 hours later!

We had a third fire on Sunday as well, but that one was not planned. It seems that someone put a plastic plate in a hot oven and the plate, with all its contents,

burst into flames. We lost some of Georges's grilled food but no real damage was done. We did learn, however, that we need a well-labeled fire extinguisher in the club kitchen for just these kinds of emergencies.

No one except Gerry Barton has been down to the Island since Sunday. I can't believe it, but I'm almost the only one down here to witness this glorious time of change and rebirth on the Island.

Tuesday, April 27, 2010

Water Level at Little Falls: 4.1 Water Temperature: 61

Foliage, it has taken over. Once barren and scarred flood land has been hidden by layers of lush green. Even places that were buried deep in silt are now carpeted with green. The flowers of the bluebells are all but gone, but the stalks, with their fat green leaves, give our island the appearance of a wild meadow. The wild blue phlox are blooming now, as is the black locust tree. There is a black locust tree full of flowers hanging right over the pedestrian bridge. I love seeing it there first thing in the morning as I trudge up the hill, and I've decide that its flower is my new favorite. It smells wonderful and I love the way it's drooping white flowers punctuate this forest of green.

Spring means nesting birds, and so far we've had at least three successful canada goose nests (baby geese are now being sighted) and now the song birds are getting started. There is a bluebird nest in one of the bird houses on the Island and there is a carolina wren nest inside the screen porch. Today and yesterday a prothonotary warbler was seen looking for nesting spots inside the screen porch as well. Not sure if this is a good thing or a bad thing. We also have eagles across the way, of course, and wood ducks and woodpeckers, all proliferating on the island.

The workfest is over but the work on the Island goes on. Jody Benjinim is kicking butt in the painting department. She has single-handedly finished all the tough painting that needed to be done down in the locker room and bathrooms. She has put in many days with long shifts and deserves our gratitude.

Meanwhile Tryon and I were working on the trail lights today. We got the cable across the river and worked hard to get it as far from the river as possible. So far, we have two of the six lights working on the mainland.

JOE HAGE

The Sycamore Islander

6613 80th Place
Cabin John, MD 20818

ADDRESS SERVICES REQUESTED

FIRST CLASS MAIL

125TH ANNIVERSARY
AND CLUBHOUSE RENOVATION

PARTY

SATURDAY, MAY 8



A bed of quite rare Twinleaf.

DAVID WINER

Large Parties Scheduled

Wednesday, May 12, Renee Dunham will host the Appalachian Club Hikers, 12–1.

Monday, May 24, Russell Sturm convenes 20–30, about 9–1.

Monday, May 31, Gavin Block invites about 25 Cub Scouts, 4–7.



SAVE THE DATE

Sycamore Island
125th Anniversary Party
May 8, 2010
Fun for all!



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. Text and graphics may be sent as email attachments to: Carol Beehler at cbeehler@comcast.net. The deadline for inclusion in the June issue is June 1.

Masthead photo by Carol Beehler.