



# The Sycamore Islander

NOVEMBER 2011 | VOLUME 90 NUMBER 11

## President's Letter

Our next Club meeting will be November 9 at 8:00 p.m. at the home of Diane and John Noble, 7024 Arandale Road, Bethesda, MD 20817. Directions: from the Sycamore Store go 1.3 miles away from D.C. on MacArthur Boulevard to Wilson Lane. Go right on Wilson Lane to first left onto Broxburn Drive and then take the first right onto Arandale Road. 7024 is the first driveway and house on the right.

At our November meeting there will be a final vote on the new process for accepting members into the Club. This new process is the final product of the special membership committee completed after many months and after several preliminary reports, lots of feedback from Club meetings, and after publication in *The Islander* and the website. We will be voting on what appears in this *Islander* issue and on the Club's website. If approved, it will be implemented January 1.

The Fall Work Session will be November 13, beginning at about 9:00 or 9:30 a.m. Come and help prepare the Island for the winter. Bring a dish for a great potluck noontime meal. The bridge repairs may be completed by then. And if not, we will have members

assigned to guide and assist folks from the old bridge to Joe's homemade bridge over the canal. Raking the fall leaves and bringing in the floats are perennials, and there will be many other jobs to do. Caretaker Joe Hage and Captain Tryon Wells will have a long list of tasks—some hard, some easy, some for kids.

For most events at Sycamore Island, members are free to come depending on their interest. The only events where all members are urged and expected to attend are the Work Sessions. We are a volunteer club. Work Sessions are our Potomac River version of an old fashioned barn raising. So come and work at tasks easy or hard, spend time with other Islanders, and enjoy a great meal.

Officers and Supervisors will be elected at our December meeting. David Winer is coordinating nominations. Contact David ([davidwiner@verizon.net](mailto:davidwiner@verizon.net)) to volunteer to serve. David reports a particular need for an Archivist, Camping/Large Party Supervisor, and a Painting/Carpentry Supervisor.

See you at the Fall Work Session on November 13.

JIM DREW  
President

## Minutes for the October 12 Meeting

The meeting was called to order by President Jim Drew at the home of Tryon Wells.

**Attendees:** Larry Heilman, Bill Marmon, Lucky Marmon Ann Marie Cunningham, Gerry Barton, Tryon Wells, John Noble, Jeff Komarow, David Winer, Jane Winer, Ann Lucy, Marianne Ross, Sherry Fizdale, Cecely Abram

**Communications:** A picnic planned by children of deceased members was postponed from November to next Spring.

**Treasurer's Report:** Allen Gelb couldn't make the meeting but assures us that all is well on the financial front.

**Captain's Report:** Tryon reported that there are several leaks in the in the Club's roof, which are being patched until the contractor can take a look. Hopefully, the roof is under warranty.

**Bridge:** Tryon says they are doing a great job on the new bridge. Meanwhile, Joe has built a temporary bridge, which involves the use of two tree trunks and ladders leading down to the canal.

**Parties:** Several members felt that a recent large wedding party, which lasted two entire days was too big, lasted too long, and overwhelmed the septic system. The usual "large party" is for 35 persons, while this party had 70 guests. Jim Drew suggested that greater scrutiny be given to the next application for a party with more than 35 guests.

**Relief Caretaking:** Sherry Fizdale reported that caretaking slots are booked through the end of November. In recruiting caretakers, she focused on people who hadn't done it for two years. Now she will shift her focus on those who haven't done it for one year.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:** The Special Membership Committee Chairman Bill Marmon thanked the Special Membership Committee members and ex-officio attendee, Jim Drew for their hard work. The committee

had so far held four in-person meetings at the home of Lucky and Bill Marmon. Tryon Wells distributed online at <http://www.sycamoreisland.org/symemapp.htm> a draft report and received 25 comments from members. All comments from members were discussed and considered by the committee.

Bill distributed the committee's proposals for Standing Rule 12, the proposed rules for application for membership, and Rule 16 E, covering the duties of the Membership Secretary.

There was a lively discussion of various proposals. Bill explained the Committee's thinking on a number of issues. . . the application process and requirement that applicants be at least 18 years old, the lottery mechanism for selecting new members, the fee schedule, and the decision to not give preference to members' children. It was explained that those on the old waiting list would be dealt with according to the old rules, and they will, of course, have priority over any new waiting list applicants. Jeff Komarow offered to survey the whereabouts of current waiting list applicants.

A number of technical amendments were suggested. The attendees authorized the committee to go forward with a final proposal based on these recommendations.

The Special Membership Committee will meet again to finalize the proposals before the November meeting where there will be an up or down vote on them.

These proposals, which were finalized at an October 26 meeting, appear in this issue of *The Islander*.

**Next Meeting:** The Club will meet at 8:00 p.m. on November 9, at the home of John and Diane Noble, 7024 Arandale Road, Bethesda, MD, 20817.

**December Meeting and Party:** The December Meeting and Holiday Party will be held on at 8:00 p.m. on December 14 at the home of Bill and Lucky Marmon, 4921 Cumberland Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD, 20815. It will be a potluck, so please bring holiday goodies and drinks to share.

The meeting ended on an upbeat note with David and Jane Winer's generous offering of root beer floats.

Respectfully submitted,  
LUCKY MARMON, Co-Recording Secretary

# Montgomery Sycamore Island Club Standing Rules

(Proposed Amendment in form of Substitution)

The Ad Hoc Membership Committee respectfully submits its final proposal to amend the procedures for application and selection into the Club. Below are the proposed texts of new Standing Rule 12—Application for Membership and a new Standing Rule 16E—Membership Secretary, to be voted on at the November Club meeting. Discussion of Committee deliberations and Club member comments can be found at the special web address:

[www.sycamoreisland.org/syrule12.htm](http://www.sycamoreisland.org/syrule12.htm).

If adopted by the Club the new application process will be initiated commencing January 1, 2012.

## 12. Application for Membership

- a. Application forms for Club membership will only be received during the first quarter of each even-numbered calendar year, commencing on January 1 and ending March 31, or at any other time determined by the Club.
- b. An applicant shall fill out and sign an application form, for which there is no initial fee. The applicant's year of birth must be listed for both spouses (or partners) as appropriate, and applicants must be at least 18 years old on January 1 of the year of application. The applicant is asked to provide the name and signature of one existing Club member as application sponsor. On the application form the applicant shall agree to conform to the Bylaws and Standing Rules, certify willingness to assist in the operation and maintenance of the Club, and acknowledge the dangers inherent in swimming and boating in the river. Applicants will be selected by lot, and those applicants selected will be required to pay an Application Fee prior to placement on the Waiting List.
- c. At the end of the application collection period, applications will be divided into two groups determined by their age on January 1 of the year of application. The first group will consist of applicants 40 years old or older ("Older Group"). The second group will consist of applicants 39 years old or younger ("Younger Group"). If the application is from a couple with ages that straddle the age divide, the couple's application will be determined to be in the Younger Group. Applications from each group will be selected and ranked by lot within their group. An equal number of applicants from both groups will be accepted.

d. It is the intent of the Club to maintain a Waiting List that will result in a wait of no more than four years. A Waiting List of 60 applicants is deemed appropriate to that goal. Therefore the number of applications to be accepted is determined by the number necessary to bring the Waiting List back up to sixty (60) Waiting List applicants. After the applicants have been ordered by lot within each group, they will be selected for addition to the Waiting List in a process that alternates between each group, starting with the applicant in the first position in the Younger Group; the next position will be filled with the first applicant from the Older Group, and so on. This procedure will be conducted by the Membership Secretary in the presence of at least two Club officers and any other member who wants to be present. If either group has fewer applicants than half the required number of vacancies for that year, applications from the other group will be used to attain 60 waiting list applicants. After the selection process is completed, successful candidates will be notified they are on the Waiting List and where they stand in the Waiting List. At this point an Application Fee will be due within 30 days of notification of the selection. Applicants who do not pay the Application Fee will be removed from the Waiting List and the next applicant, as determined earlier by lot, will be added.

e. Prior to Club admission, Waiting List applicants must become "Qualified Applicants" by completing the following: (1) attend a supervised Orientation sponsored by the Club; and (2) procure two letters of recommendation from existing members who are not immediate family members. (These letters are separate from, and in addition to, the one sponsoring member name on the initial application.) In the event that the time interval between a Waiting List applicant's placement on the Waiting List, and being offered membership is less than one (1) year, the Waiting List applicant may be granted ninety (90) days to fulfill the requirements to become a Qualified Applicant, otherwise, Waiting List applicants who do not become Qualified Applicants by the time they are offered membership, will be removed from the Waiting List. A Qualified Applicant who is offered Club membership and declines the offer will be removed from the Waiting List. A Qualified Applicant who is out of the area at the time membership is offered, may begin Club membership as an Inactive Member pursuant to Bylaw 17, otherwise, will be removed from the Waiting List. New members will pay an Initiation Fee and pro-rata dues for the year of admission. Waiting List applicants shall receive *The Sycamore Islander*.

f. Applications not accepted for the Waiting List that year will be discarded. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified and reminded that they may reapply in the future.

g. If an applicant on the Waiting List is a couple who become separated or divorced, each partner may remain a Waiting List candidate upon written request to the Membership Secretary, so long as a second non-refundable application fee is paid and so long as other requirements for Waiting List candidates are fulfilled. In the absence of agreement by applicants, the Membership Secretary shall flip a coin to determine the order of the partners on the Waiting List.

h. Applicants are expected to participate in Club events, such as workfests, relief caretaking and Club meetings. Applicants may purchase a Waiting List Pass for use of the Club as provided in Standing Rule 7.

i. A two-thirds vote of the members present and eligible to vote shall be required for approval for Club membership.

j. Under the Membership Rules prior to 2012, "Waiting List Members" and applicants on the old waiting list will have priority for Club Membership over any new applicant.

#### 16E. Membership Secretary

Shall:

a. Ensure that the application form for membership in the Club is available for downloading from the Club website. Accept and retain properly completed and timely-submitted hard copy applications for membership. Acknowledge receipt of application and be available to answer questions from applicants about the application process.

b. Pursuant to the process outlined in Standing Rule 12, at the end of each application period—January 1 to March 31 in even numbered years or as otherwise determined by the Club—sort applications into two groups: the Younger Group and the Older Group. Applicants in each group should be rank ordered on a random basis in a procedure conducted by the Membership Secretary in the presence of at least two Club officers and any other members wishing to be present.

c. Pursuant to the process outlined in Standing Rule 12, select applicants from each age group to fill vacancies on the Waiting List. Notify all applicants of their status, successful or unsuccessful, after the selection procedure, and inform unsuccessful candidates that they may apply again in the future. Notify the Club Financial Secretary of names and addresses of the new Waiting List applicants

in order that the Waiting List fee may be collected.

d. As membership vacancies arise, propose Waiting List applicants who have become Qualified, pursuant to Standing Rule 12(f), for Club membership in the order they appear on the Waiting List.

e. File and preserve the applications that have been accepted for the Waiting List, as well as relevant correspondence and other papers or materials relevant to the membership process. Maintain until July 1, or until such time as directed by the President, the unsuccessful applications. Afterwards, unsuccessful applications may be discarded.

f. Issue Waiting List Passes in accordance with Standing Rule 6.

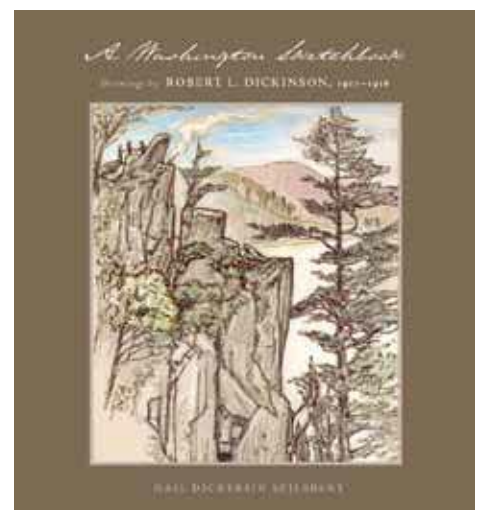
g. Keep a current list of members, updated in the database; ensure distribution to members a roster of all members, officers and supervisors in the Sycamore Islander's January edition.

h. Review the references of each Waiting List applicant;

i. See to it that a formal Club Orientation event is organized, publicized and conducted each spring to introduce the Club's events, procedures and rules to Club applicants on the Waiting List. Make a record of Club applicants who attended and ensure that attendance is properly recorded since attendance is a prerequisite for Membership

*A Washington Sketchbook:*  
Drawings by Robert L. Dickinson, 1917–1918  
By Gail Spilsbury

While doing the research for this book, author Gail Spilsbury came to the Island and discovered an original trail map drawn by R.L. Dickinson in the clubhouse.



## Notes from the Island

**Sunday, October 2, 2011**

**Water Level at Little Falls: 4.3 Water Temperature: 62**

The sun is trying to come out but it's pretty cold for early October. The river temp has dropped drastically as well, it's only 62 this morning.

No visitors at all yesterday. There was a scout troop scheduled to be here but they didn't show and the folks that had planned to camp here last night reconsidered as well. I guess people don't like to camp when it's raining and in the forties, go figure.

I've been under the weather for a week now and it's getting really old. My condition is slightly improved today so I'm determined to get out and cut the grass and all the other chores that I've been unable to do. I haven't been able to do any painting for over a month on account of this rainy weather but my primary concern is the roof. It looks like our new roof over my kitchen is leaking, badly. It might be hard to get a contractor down here since we don't have a bridge but we'll have to deal with it one way or another, it's leaking pretty bad.

**Monday, October 3, 2011**

**Water Level at Little Falls: 4.3 Water Temperature: 59**

The temperature of the river is dropping fast. At this rate we'll have ice by Thanksgiving!

Speaking of cold, it was 50 degrees in the house when I got up on Saturday. I had to turn on the furnace! I hated to do it; usually we can wait until November to fire it up. So, since it is still only early October, I decided to wear a wool cap and set the temperature at 65.

**Friday, October 7, 2011**

**Water Level at Little Falls: 4.0 Water Temperature: 62**

This is frustrating. It's a beautiful day and no one is working on the bridge. They will probably not be here on Monday either since it's a holiday. Sadly, they seem to not work more than they work. They did, however, bring down the heavy equipment and there is a big cherry picker type truck parked on the towpath.

I have not seen the great egrets lately. I'm afraid they may have left for the winter. Happily, there were a few warblers passing through yesterday. We also had a visit from a few thousand blackbirds and grackles. It wasn't clear what all those birds were doing but they were here



JOE HAGE

A misty morning

making a lot of noise in the trees of the Island for about twenty minutes and then they were gone.

**Friday, October 28, 2011**

**Water Level at Little Falls: 3.5 Water Temperature: 55**

It has been a busy month on the river for me. Three weeks ago I led three canoes down the river from Anglers Inn to Sycamore Island. It was great weather and the river was at a nice level, 4.0.

Then on Columbus Day I took an OC1 canoe and did the run from Sycamore Island to Chain Bridge! That was the first time that I'd done Little Falls by myself and it was very exciting. The river level that morning was 3.6.

Then, on October 13–16 I took my canoe and camping gear up to western Maryland and paddled the Paw Paw bends of the Potomac. The colors were perfect and



JOE HAGE

Beaver damage. One less river birch on the Island. Very sad.

the camping was very civilized. I recommend that trip to everyone.

Last weekend I was on the north fork of the south branch of the Potomac but not to paddle. That part of the river is just below the climbing mecca of Seneca Rocks and I was there to climb. The river is small there but very beautiful with a perfect swimming hole.

Meanwhile, things on the Island are pretty slow. There does not seem to be a lot of people using the club this past month, I guess the bridge construction is keeping a lot of people away. Speaking of the bridge, they are making some good progress and it looks like we may be able to use it during the workfest coming on November 13. The new bridge looks really good with



JOE HAGE

The bridge is almost finished!

fresh paint and new planks and I was thinking that we should do some kind of ribbon-cutting ceremony to commemorate the occasion. That bridge was built in 1902!

Speaking of historic: There is a new book coming out this month, *A Washington Sketchbook: Drawings by Robert L. Dickinson*. It is published by Chesapeake Book Company. This book is significant to the Club for two reasons. First, while doing the research for the book, author Gail Spilsbury came to the Island and discovered that we had an original trail map drawn by R.L. Dickinson here in the clubhouse. The other connection is that Gail used a quote from my daily log as a caption for one of the sketches!

Migrating and wintering birds are around now. I saw an eastern towhee along the trail yesterday, and today I saw three golden-crowned kinglets outside my window. I also saw my first grebe of the season.

### Monday, October 31, 2011

**Water Level at Little Falls: 4.0 Water Temperature: 55**

It looks like the bridge might be finished in time for the workfest on November 13!

It's too bad that the lack of a bridge seems to be keeping people away! It is so beautiful along the river right now. The colors are brilliant and the cold weather creates a cool-looking mist on the river most mornings.

JOE HAGE

### Saturday Relief Caretakers **November 2011**

	10 A.M.–2 P.M.	2 P.M.–DARK
NOVEMBER 5	Penelope Mitchell 301.229.4606	Alissa Stern and Louis Boorstin 301.229.4573
NOVEMBER 12	Patricia Hartge 301.907.6657	Whitney Pinger and Roger Pollack 202.686.5443
NOVEMBER 19	Lucky and Bill Marmon 301.654.7893	Robert Braunohler 202.291.3717
NOVEMBER 26	PLEASE VOLUNTEER	Madeleine Carter and Alec Graham 301.320.7720

# Leaves

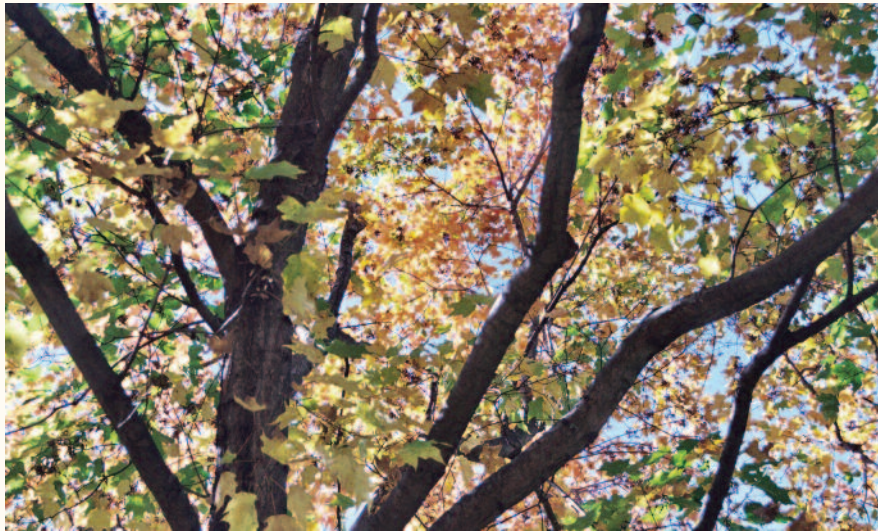
ELSIE N. BRADY



CARY BEEHLER

How silently they tumble down  
And come to rest upon the ground  
To lay a carpet, rich and rare,  
Beneath the trees without a care,  
Content to sleep, their work well done,  
Colors gleaming in the sun.

At other times, they wildly fly  
Until they nearly reach the sky.  
Twisting, turning through the air  
Till all the trees stand stark and bare.  
Exhausted, drop to earth below  
To wait, like children, for the snow.



CARY BEEHLER

# The Sycamore Islander

6613 80th Place  
Cabin John, MD 20818

ADDRESS SERVICES REQUESTED

## FIRST CLASS MAIL



CARY BEEHLER

*The Sycamore Islander* is the monthly newsletter of the Montgomery Sycamore Island Club. Every attempt is made to publish the *Islander* before the second Wednesday of the month in advance of the monthly meeting. 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  
cbeehler@comcast.net  
The deadline for inclusion in the December issue is December 5.

**There are no large parties  
scheduled for November.**



Masthead photo by Joe Hage