



The Sycamore Islander

AUGUST 2013 | VOLUME 92 NUMBER 8

President's Letter

The regular club meeting will be held Wednesday, August 14, at 8:00 p.m. on the Island. Come early for swim and picnic!

I have been traveling in Europe and the northeast U.S. for much of June and July and missed two club meetings, well handled by vice president Sherry Fizdale. I returned to the Island recently as a part of one of David Winer's regular Friday bicycling expeditions. This ride, with 16 cyclists wearing gaudy Hawaii style shirts, went from the old Sycamore Store to WideWater on the canal and back to the Island for picnic and swimming. However, just beyond Glen Echo Park Jane Winer slipped and fell on road construction on Macarthur Boulevard and banged her hip badly enough to be taken to hospital where the x-ray showed a small crack in the pelvis. She is recuperating at home and the prognosis is good. We all wish her speedy recovery.

At Jane's insistence David rejoined the ride and led the group to the Island where David had provided watermelon and chips. It is always a treat to show off

the Island to guests who find it hard to believe such a place exists 10 minutes from the White House.

As Ann Marie Cunningham has reported, the project to possibly relocate U.S. Geological Survey monitoring instruments to the Island has been delayed because of funding shortfall, but the project is not dead. The USGS staffer, Joe Bell, who is handling the matter is planning, at our invitation, to speak again to the club in the next month or two.

At the August meeting the club will consider a previous motion made to amend Standing Rule 2, by adding section g, which would read: "Smoking is prohibited in the clubhouse, decks and tool shed." This motion was made several meetings ago but because of the late publication of the *May Islander* giving the required notice, consideration has been delayed.

Also at the August meeting the club will consider the report of the special nominating committee, headed by David Winer, to select a replacement for Larry Heilman as swimming supervisor.

BILL MARMON
President

Minutes for the July 10 Meeting

Attendees: Alice Bullard, Ned Goddard, Jim Drew, Drew Walsh, Jody Benjamin, John Noble, Sherry Fizdale, Louise Meyer, Geoff Holdridge, Joe Hage, and Ann Marie Cunningham.

Vice President Sherry Fizdale called the meeting to order. The minutes of the June meeting as published in *The Islander* were approved.

Communications: Ann Marie Cunningham received an email from Joe Bell of the US Geological Survey in which he said that work on the project to relocate certain instruments that measure water quality had been suspended due to funding restrictions as a result of sequestration. He hopes that in October they can begin again. He extended an offer to come to the Island to speak about water quality. Ann Marie will make arrangements for such a presentation. Watch *The Islander* for details.

Membership: John Noble nominated, and the members present accepted, Catherine Bourassa and her son into membership. They were recommended by Judy Lentz and Renee Butler. This brings the number of regular members to maximum of 160.

Captain's Report: Drew Walsh reported Joe Hage has taken on a lot of small projects to improve the clubhouse and grounds. On Sunday, July 12, he will lead a group of members in a work project to clear the path down from the parking lot as part of the Canal Steward Volunteer Program.

Drew also reported that Ann Lucy was hospitalized after a fall in her home. John Noble will send her a card to wish her a speedy recovery.

Relief Caretaking Report: On behalf of all members, Jody Benjamin expressed appreciation and gratitude to those members who volunteered as relief caretakers during the month of June. Thank you, John Butler, Birgit Anne and Brian Waidmann, David Powell, Penny and Bob McNulty, Marianne Ross, Elizabeth Taylor, Susan Dunham and Dan Sember, Eric Simpson, Penelope Mitchell, and Kevin Haley.

Old Business: A motion had been made to amend Standing Rule 2 to prohibit smoking in the clubhouse,

decks, and tool shed, and was to have been considered at the May meeting. However, members had not received notice of this amendment as *The Islander* was received after the meeting. The amendment will be considered at the August meeting.

New Business: John Noble expressed his pleasure at seeing the photography and layout of the July *Islander*, particularly the photos of the children jumping from the swim float and the butterflies.

The next meeting will be on the Island on August 14th at 8:00. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
ANN MARIE CUNNINGHAM
Co-recording Secretary



Notes from the Island

Thursday, July 11, 2013

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.3 Water Temperature: 84
I wasn't here on the 4th but I heard there were quite a few picnickers here that day. They must have been having a great time because I heard that they didn't want to leave, even when it got dark.

Friday, July 12, 2013

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.8 Water Temperature: 78
The river shot up to over four feet last night but now it's settled down again. That was quite a rain—I'm not sure exactly how much rain we got here. My rain gauge was so full it overflowed.

Monday, July 15, 2013

Water Level at Little Falls: 4.2 Water Temperature: 78
Wow, the river rose from 3.4 yesterday morning up to 4.5 by 2 p.m.! It was amazing to see the different water levels each time I went to pull the ferry. It was not so nice, however, seeing all of those plastic water bottles floating by, literally hundreds.

I led my group of Canal Stewards yesterday morning. Five of us worked for two hours and got a hell of a lot done. It was really hot but we felt good about volunteering in the National Park.

The sycamore that I talked about last month has fallen. It was bound for the floor ever since the derecho

of last year and on Saturday night it finally fell. It was really startling. Mary and I happened to be crossing to the Island at about 12:30 a.m. when it came crashing down!

There have been six drownings in the Potomac so far this year. All of the drownings took place very close to here. Please use caution and common sense when swimming or playing in the river.

Tuesday, July 23, 2013

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.5 Water Temperature: 88

It's been nice having water in the canal for a change. It's cool to watch the carp swimming around and now the bluegills are breeding and digging little circular nests on the bottom of the canal.

I finally went out fishing last evening. I had a slow start and spent the first hour paddling up stream and getting my poorly-thrown lures out of the trees. Things picked up after 8 and each small mouth bass that I caught was successively bigger until I caught a nice 2-pounder. I was lucky enough to see the moon rise pink over the trees while I was out there. I think I saw an otter too.

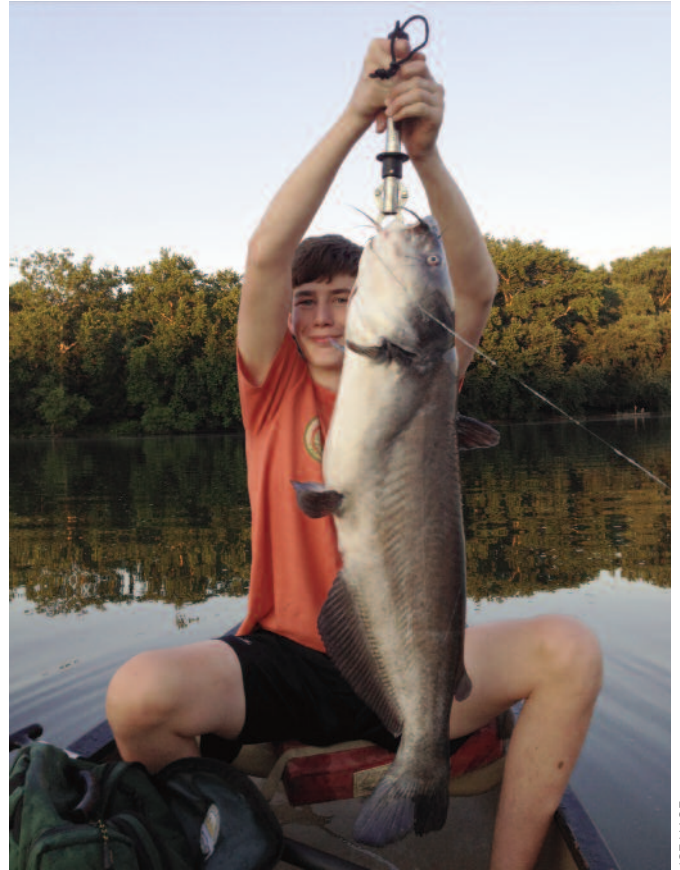
A summer phenomenon was witnessed last night. I'm not certain if it had anything to do with the full moon but the river's surface was really active with fish. So, like I've done in years past, I banged my paddle really hard on the gunwales and presto, dozens of fish leaped out of the water all around me! Freaky!

I've been hearing a sound that I couldn't explain. It was a high-pitched gate hinge type sound that ascended from low to high. At first I thought that it must have been some type of bird but none fit the call that I was hearing. Then it hit me—maybe it was the nocturnal flying squirrel that I was hearing! I did some research which confirmed my theory. We seem to have a healthy population of southern flying squirrels living on and around the Island. Cool!

Thursday, July 25, 2013

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.9 Water Temperature: 88

The river is going up, again! It rose .8 feet over the last three days and is supposed to crest at 3.9 but it looks to me like it's still rising. It might even get above four feet before tonight! This might not sound like a very big deal but there is a big difference between 3 feet and 4 feet when it come to swimming. Usually, the current is not an issue in July. Last year the river did not get above 3.3 for the whole month. One guideline that I use when swimming is that if you can't see the rocks directly in



Ben Malmgren and a very large catfish

JOE HAGE

front of the swim float in the center of the river, then it might be too high to swim

Clearing trails cutting grass, thank goodness that the weather has sweetened up.

Wednesday, July 31, 2013

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.1 Water Temperature: 82

The river never got below 3 feet for the entire month. I don't think that has ever happened since I moved here 11 years ago.

Bad news: the canal has been drained and once again resembles a shallow swamp. Those poor nesting bluegills—and there go my plans to paddle down the canal to Georgetown and back.

The tree above the captain's float is slowly falling. According to my calculations, the tree is two inches closer to the ground than it was a week ago. I moved the float upstream and out from under the arching tree.

I walked out this morning and there was a barred owl on the lawn. Made my day.

The fishing has picked up and club members are pulling in lots of bass and some very large catfish. One cat weighed in at 16 pounds!

JOE HAGE
Caretaker

The Sycamore Islander

6613 80th Place
Cabin John, MD 20818

ADDRESS SERVICES REQUESTED

FIRST CLASS MAIL

To volunteer as a substitute caretaker, please email your choice of day and shift to Jody Benjamin, benjafamily@gmail.com.

Saturday Relief Caretakers August/September 2013					
AUGUST	9 A.M.–3 P.M.	3 P.M.–DUSK	SEPTEMBER	10 A.M.–3 P.M.	3 P.M.–DUSK
AUGUST 3	Penelope Mitchell	Fred Wright	SEPTEMBER 7	Julia and Peter Smith	Please Volunteer
AUGUST 10	Ashley Baquie	Please Volunteer	SEPTEMBER 14	Please Volunteer	Please Volunteer
AUGUST 17	Andrew Umhau	Sandra Youn and Raj Purohit	SEPTEMBER 21	Please Volunteer	Tanya and Geoffry Cook
AUGUST 24	Phoebe Hamill	Ned Goddard	SEPTEMBER 28	Please Volunteer	Please Volunteer
AUGUST 31	Please Volunteer	Lynda and Gary Slayen			

The Sycamore Islander is the monthly newsletter of the Montgomery Sycamore Island Club. Every attempt is made to publish *The Islander* by the first of the month. Text and graphics may be sent as email attachments to: Carol Beehler, cbeehler@comcast.net. The deadline for inclusion in the September issue is August 30.