



The Sycamore Islander

NOVEMBER 2013 | VOLUME 92 NUMBER 11

President's Letter

The regular club meeting will be Wednesday, November 13, on the Island at 8:00 p.m. (unless there is an early blizzard or other unforeseen disaster.) Longtime member John Lentz will present his just-published book, "Tales from the Paddle," about his canoe trips in wilderness Canada and Siberia. This should be a treat. Books will available to purchase at a discount.

IMPORTANT DATE—Sunday November 10—Fall Workfest on the Island, commencing at 9 with coffee and turkey bacon. Details outlined by Captain Drew Walsh appear separately in *The Islander*. (Rain date is November 17.)

And speaking of dates—Mark calendars for Wednesday, December 11, 8 p.m., and the Island Christmas Party and December meeting. Party/meeting will be graciously hosted by waitlisters Linda and Gary, at 6605 Rivercrest Court, Bethesda, in Mohican Hills near the club. There will be a brief business meeting to elect officers and supervisors for next year and then it's party time. Bring a dish to share.

Slate of nominated officers and supervisors for next year is printed in this *Islander*, as required by Standing

Rule 17(a). I want to thank all those who have agreed to take leadership positions going forward. The energy of our members is key to making the Island work. We also appreciate those who are stepping down after notable and sometimes many years service, including Alan and Caroline Gelb, Larry Heilman, Sherrie Fizdale, and Gerry Barton.

Note that applications for new membership in the club will be accepted commencing January 1 and be accepted through March 31. Application form will be available on the web site. There will be a limited number of open places on the waiting list this time, determined by vacancies whose number will not be known until April. Spots will be filled by lottery, managed by Membership Secretary John Noble and assisted by Elizabeth Thomas. Applicants will be placed in two pools—one for 40 years old and younger and the second for those older than 40—and selected by lottery with equal number taken from each pool.

(We still need a volunteer to host January 8, 2014, regular club meeting.)

BILL MARMON
President

Notes for the October 9th Gathering

Attendees: Jane Winer, Dave Winer, Bill Marmon, Drew Walsh, Lucky Marmon, Joe Hage, Alan Gelb, Jim Drew, Gerald S. Barton, and Ann Marie Cunningham

As there was not a quorum present, a discussion of various club activities occurred, but no official action was taken.

Captain's Report: On behalf of all the members, Drew Walsh thanked Davey Hearn, Gerry Barton, Joe Hage, Kevin Haley, Parker Moore, Ned Goddard, Roger Herst, and Rodolfo Castro for their efforts in repairing the pontoons on the ferry. The front end had gotten crushed out of shape from repeated collisions with the steps. It was a herculean effort, beginning with hauling the front end of the ferry out of the water on Wednesday, October 4. Davey is an expert at boat maintenance and repair, so he led the efforts in grounding off the old patch, sanding the metal, laying a coat of epoxy, covering it with a glass cloth, adding a layer of Kevlar, and adding something to resist abrasion, all with coats of resin between each layer. On Thursday, the surface was sanded and another coat of resin was added. On Friday, the pontoons were again sanded and covered with a coat of white paint. Better plugs were installed to prevent leakage, and counterweights added to balance it. The ferry was returned to the water. As the damage was caused by collisions with the steps, the lowest step has been removed. And please, to reduce the likelihood of further damage, please dock the ferry gently.

16 new plastic chairs have been purchased at a savings, replacing broken ones.

Joe Hage and Mary Kearney have also earned our gratitude for assembling our new ping pong table.

The Fall Workfest is scheduled for Sunday, November 10th, rain date, Sunday, November 17th. Time: 9:00 a.m. As usual, there will be fun and connections as we work, followed by a potluck lunch.

Treasurer's Report: Alan Gelb reported that we have been solvent for the first nine months this year. He expects that, with about 70% of the budget spent, we will end the year with slightly more in reserve than last year. Insurance costs continue to be a major budget item and may require some adjustments to the budget next year.

Alan discussed the transition plan he has developed to transfer his responsibilities to Ned Goddard. They will work together over several months in developing the next budget, changing signatures and addresses on the accounts, and filing the required government paperwork. Bill Eichbaum, our Supervisor of Finance, will review the records in January.

Membership: A new lottery to add more people to the waiting list will be held in April 2014. This will increase the new waiting list to 60 persons.

Relief Caretaker's Report: Chairman Jody Benjamin expressed heartfelt gratitude to those who served as relief caretakers so that Joe Hage could enjoy his days off without a care. In September, they were Penny and Richard Doolittle, Carole Trippe and Kit Bgler, Tanya and Geoffrey Cook, David and Sharon Gustafson, Norman and Nancy Metzger, Julie Saulnier and Mark Friedrichs, and Kevin Haley.

Old Business: The Good Timers lunch was held on Oct 1, despite the government shut-down, and a great time was had by all, with Joe playing his guitar, the Hearn family on harmonica and ukulele, everyone singing, great stories being told, and delectable food.

The Fishing Derby was an awardfest, despite the paucity of big fish. George and Shelley Malusky ensured that children of all ages had a wonderful time, especially those who had never fished before.

New Business: Tryon Wells has agreed to chair the nominating committee, as it is time to present a slate of new officers in November, to be elected at the Holiday meeting in December. Contact tryonwells@verizon.net if you are interested in serving.

Next Meeting: Prior to the meeting on November 13th, John Lentz will talk about his new book, *Tales From the Paddle*. John has written of his lifelong love of exploring Arctic wilderness rivers, an experience which has made him a noted expert. A highlight of his explorations was his discovery of artifacts from the Franklin expedition. Jane Winer has said she will bring homemade cookies in honor of John's accomplishment.

Respectfully submitted,
ANN MARIE CUNNINGHAM, Co-Recording Secretary

A Report on the Ferry

We had about 5 folks down on Tuesday evening to pull the front onto the shore. Davey and Drew were down 10-ish on Wednesday. I arrived about noon. Davey and I were there until 7:30. Davey did meticulous work: peeled and ground off the old patch and filler, sanded the metal, laid an thickened G/flex epoxy filler coat to seal any leaks and provide a smooth surface to laminate onto, covered with glass cloth (cut on the bias, I learned something), more resin to hold the glass, layer of Kevlar Felt about 1/8 inch thick, more resin to hold the Kevlar, layer of Dynel for abrasion resistance, more resin. . . At 7:30 we went home and left two canoes locked to the ferry steps.

Thursday, Davey and Gerry worked about 2 hours sanding, then applied a thin layer of resin with peelply nylon layer for final surfacing. This layer is to be peeled off for a smooth surface.

Friday, Davey and about 4 others got the ferry back in the water. We disconnected the come-along, Joe gave it a push, and she was in the water.

Drew bought two new plugs for the hull assess holes. He took a swim and put them in as I left at about 3 p.m. Davey took a well-deserved paddle.

GERRY BARTON

Fall 2013 Sycamore Island Workfest

It's time to get the Island ready for winter again. The Sycamore Island Workfest is November 10th (rain date November 17th). Things get started around 9 a.m. with coffee, donuts, and delicious crispy turkey bacon. There will be plenty of projects to do all day long so arrive when you can. Lunch from the grill will be provided by the club. Please bring your favorite side dish or dessert to add to the feast. If you have an extra rake, chainsaw, or some spare rags they will be put to good use. Below is a list of what we have planned so far. You might see something else that needs attention as well.

Volunteers to run the Ferry

Strong backs to bring our docks and swim float in for the winter

Turn over existing compost before we add more leaves

Rake leaves off the lawn



DREW WALSH



DAVEY HEARSH

Ferry repairs

Cut up fallen tree trunks and limbs, collect, split and stack firewood, collect kindling

Set up walls for winter bathroom

Continue our bricklaying project

Organize pile of scrap wood

Wrap young trees with chicken wire

Pick up trash in and around Macarthur and the Parkway lots

Load up trash from parking lots and Island into pickup truck for hauling

Hillside trail maintenance

Clean and organize clubhouse

All this can't get down without your help! This is a great opportunity to break a sweat for the Island and enjoy delicious food in the company of friends. Waiting list and regular members are all welcome.

DREW WALSH

Captain

2014 Slate of Officers and Supervisors

OFFICERS

President	Bill Marmon
Vice President	Tyron Wells
Co-Recording Secretary	Ann Marie Cunningham
Co-Recording Secretary	Lucky Marmon
Treasurer	Ned Goddard
Financial Secretary	Lisa Kliefoth
Membership Secretary	John Noble
Editor	Carol Beehler
Archivist	Karen Possner
Captain	Drew Walsh
Deputy Captain	Steve Newman

SUPERVISORS

Finance	Bill Eichbaum
Law	Maurice Tobin
Clubhouse	Marianne Ross
Grounds	Ann Lucy
Painting/Carpentry	Karl Kosok
Website	Tryon Wells
Entertainment	George and Shelley Malusky
Camping/Parties	Jonathan Zmmerman
Canoeing	John Membrino
Swimming	Roger Herst
Relief Caretaking Schedule	Jody Benjamin

Don't forget to come to the
Workfest



Sunday, November 10, 9:00 a.m.

Notes from the Island

Friday, October 11, 2013

Water Level at Little Falls: 4.0 Water Temperature: 67
The gauge at Little falls does not seem to be accurate. I'm looking at the river and it is already above 4 feet.
It looks like we will be forced to close the ferry tomorrow. The river is predicted to go above five feet at about 8 am.

Saturday, October 12, 2013

Water Level at Little Falls: 6.0 Water Temperature: 62
The river level right now is 6 feet. The gauge at Little Falls isn't working but we do have the Sycamore Island gauge. Some of the other gauges upstream don't seem to be working either but I think the river will be up for a couple of days. The Monocacy reached flood stage but will crest soon, along with all the other smaller streams in the area. Not much rain fell in the western part of the watershed so no real threat from far up river. The rain gauge here on the Island recorded 6 inches of rain!

Monday, October 14, 2013

Water Level at Little Falls: 4.5 Water Temperature: 62
Happy Columbus Day, or, as us of Norwegian heritage like to say, Happy Lief Ericsson Day. (He discovered America long before Columbus.)

The river has settled back down and the ferry is running once again. I must say, it was a nice break.

Tuesday, October 29, 2013

Water Level at Little Falls: 2.99 Water Temperature: 53
I guess I should get everyone caught up with all of the October happenings. The month started with the Old-timers picnic on the October 2nd. This happened to be the same day that the Federal Government was forced to shut down, so there was a lot of confusion and phone-calling going on that morning. Since The C&O Canal Historic Park was officially closed, it was unclear whether we would be able to get to the Island. It was decided that we had the right of way since we were here before the canal was a Federal Park, and besides, who was going to stop us anyway. Well it turned out to be a good decision and we all had a good time and no one was arrested. One problem that we had during the Shutdown was that they closed off the parking lot on the parkway. That didn't seem to bother Charlotte



MARY KEARNEY

Joe Hage using a rock climbing ascender and carabiners to raise the anchors on the swim float

Brewer when she arrived for the picnic. She went behind the barriers and parked there anyway, hilarious!

The following week, Fall arrived. After having experienced the mildest summer in all of my life in D.C., the cold and rain hit us on October 7. Suddenly summer was over. The fishing died, the swimming died and the leaves began flying all around. It's hard to let the summer go, but Autumn offers it's own set of delights. The Autumn sunsets are the best and I love it when the sun reflects off of the clouds, creating a golden-glow effect all across the Island. Add to this the bright yellow hickory leaves and deep red Virginia creeper and the scene is breathtaking.

I already talked about the soaking rain we got. The river only got up to six feet, but that was impressive, considering that it was only at 2.75 before the rain started. Thankfully for us, the rain stayed to the east and the flooding was minimal. I did have to shovel some mud and untangle the Captain's float. I also paddled out to the swim float to remove all of the big logs, trash and debris that had collected there.

The stormy weather did bring down some branches and one particularly large branch fell and took out our lights on the trail down the hill. The problem wasn't too serious but I did have to take the ladder over there and rewire the lights and replace the broken bulbs.

While I was up on the ladder, Bill Endicott (former Olympic Canoeing coach) came walking by. He was frustrated, like the rest of us, about the fact that the canal never seems to have water in it. He told me that he talked to some Park officials and found out that there is a construction project down stream, where the canal meets Wisconsin Ave., and that they were draining the canal to keep it from leaking into the building site. Obviously a serious case of conflicting interests.

It looks to me that we have a new fishing guru for the club. Michael Grant has surpassed George Malusky as the expert on fishing from Sycamore Island. Michael spent the summer outfitting his new fishing kayak and has been going after the fish with reckless abandon. George? Didn't see him all summer. Sorry George.

I've spent most of this month and part of last month waiting for our trusted roofer to show up. I guess Robert Patch isn't too hungry these days, because I can't seem to beg him to come down and replace the little roof above my foyer. We also had some minor leaks in the main roof that I was hoping that they could fix but since they never showed, I decided to take matters into my own hands. We won't know until we get another hard rain but I think I found the problem with the leak by the record player. There was a very suspicious nail sticking up from the shingles so I pounded it back in and sealed it good with some roofing caulk. I also put some caulk along the other minor leaks by the front door and in back by the pool table. We'll keep our fingers crossed.

I cut the grass one last time and I borrowed a friend's leaf blower to work on the leaves and gutters. The blower works great! I'm not sure now why I was so resistant to them, maybe it was the noise, but they get the work done. Might have to get one for the club.

Wednesday, October 30, 2013

Water Level at Little Falls: 2.97 Water Temperature: 53

We had a pretty good downpour this morning and guess what? My patch worked and the roof didn't leak! Maybe I should go into the roof-patching business.

I hosted the Cub Scouts from Den 2, Troop 499, here on Sunday. They brought us a home made bird feeder



JOANNE TOOLEY

made out of recycled materials and full of birdseed. I talked to them about the river and it's history but mostly they wanted to see the cannon ball and ride the zip line and rope swing. We all had a great time, including some of the young club members that joined in.

If you walk up to the head of the Island, you might think that a herd of elephant had been there but it was only me going crazy on all the invasive vines and knotweed. I'm determined not to let the kudzu, the knotweed or the oriental bittersweet take over the Island. And I'm proud to say, that so far I've been successful. It's hard work but very gratifying.

My 15 minutes of fame are not over yet. Tonight Whit Overstreet and myself will be giving a slide show and talking about our two kayak trips down the lower Potomac. This time we'll be hosted by The Potomac River Smallmouth Club. They have been around for 25 years and I'm looking forward to meeting them and learning more about their club.

Thursday, October 31, 2013

Water Level at Little Falls: 2.98 Water Temperature: 53

I hear it all the time, "You're so lucky to live on an Island." It's true, I am lucky, and even as I prepare for my 12th winter on Sycamore Island, I still take time to appreciate all of the wonders of living here. However, it is a job, and like any job, being caretaker has its challenges. Believe it or not, it isn't always easy being the sole employee of the MSIC. But, as long as I feel like I'm being appreciated for what I do and have done for the club, I'm happy to stay on and try to make Sycamore Island the fun and friendly place it should be.

Special Notice: Colonel Josh and the Honky Tonk Heroes at Haydee's in Mt. Pleasant, Saturday, November 9th!

JOE HAGE
Caretaker

Gathering Leaves

ROBERT FROST



CARY BEEHLER

Spades take up leaves
No better than spoons,
And bags full of leaves
Are light as balloons.
I make a great noise
Of rustling all day
Like rabbit and deer
Running away.
But the mountains I raise
Elude my embrace,
Flowing over my arms
And into my face.
I may load and unload
Again and again
Till I fill the whole shed,
And what have I then?
Next to nothing for weight,
And since they grew duller
From contact with earth,
Next to nothing for color.
Next to nothing for use.
But a crop is a crop,
And who's to say where
The harvest shall stop?

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 November/December 2013				
NOVEMBER	9 A.M.–2 P.M.	2 P.M.–DUSK	DECEMBER	11 A.M.–SUNSET
NOVEMBER 2	Penelope Mitchell	Pam Sommers and Fred Pinkney	DECEMBER 7	John and Susanna Membrino
NOVEMBER 9	Ned Goddard	Robert Braunohler	DECEMBER 14	Please Volunteer
NOVEMBER 16	David Lyles	Jody and Bobby Benjamin	DECEMBER 21	Joan Barron
NOVEMBER 23	Meg Beuchert Jones	Julia Strasser	DECEMBER 28	Please Volunteer
NOVEMBER 30	Kathy Carroll	Rodolfo Castro		

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, photographs, drawings—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 November 29.