



The Sycamore Islander

AUGUST 2014 | VOLUME 93 NUMBER 8

President's Letter

Next club meeting is **Wednesday August 13 at 8:00 p.m. on the Island**. Great opportunity for picnic or barbie and even a swim beforehand, during the Island's peak season!

Speaking of peaks, two of the club's best events are coming up in the next month. Fishing Derby, Saturday August 16, starting at 8:30, will be orchestrated as usual by George and Shelley Malusky (see notice elsewhere in this issue). Maluskys are master fishermen but make this event fun for amateurs like me.

And (drum roll) the Island's Labor Day Regatta, with the incomparable Cindy Bertaut, will be held on Monday, September 1, Labor Day, starting at 1:30 p.m. Fun for the whole family with races, games, and picnic at 5:30 p.m. (see notice.)

Waitlisters and guests are welcome at both events.

Also for calendar marking is the club dance, scheduled for September 27, with live band, coordinated by

Jane Winer with strong assist from Robin Richter.

And Old Timers-Good Timers lunch on Wednesday, September 24. (Any member who can get away at mid-day mid-week is welcome.) Bring a dish to share. Start time 11:30. Lucky Marmon coordinator.

Note—It is important that any waitlisters with waitlist passes or waitlisters who think they may use the Island because of service (caretaker sub-duty) credits, must go through an orientation session before using the Island. Membership Secretary John Noble is scheduling several rump orientations for those who missed the regular session in May. Call or mail him to schedule.

The Nomination committee is in the process of firming up club leadership positions for 2015. Those interested in stepping up their participation in Island affairs should contact Ann Marie Cunningham, Tryon Wells, or me.

BILL MARMON
President

Minutes for the July 9 Meeting

Attendees: Meredith Griggs, John Cunningham, Drew Walsh, Tryon Wells, Jennifer Hearn, Joe Hage, Jane Winer, Ned Goddard, Robin Richter, David Winer, Steve Newman, Sherry Pettie Fizdale, Larry Heilman, John Noble, Marianne Ross, and Ann Marie Cunningham

Call to Order and Minutes: The meeting was called to order by vice president Tryon Wells following a very interesting talk presented by Joe Bell of the US Geological Survey on water quality in the Potomac. The minutes of the May 14, 2014, meeting were approved.

Nominating: Ann Marie Cunningham was elected chair of this committee, which is responsible for nominating a slate of officers in November to be voted upon at the annual meeting in December. Bill Marmon and Tryon Wells will serve on the committee. If interested in supporting the club next year as an officer or supervisor, please contact Ann Marie.

Grounds: Ann Lucy has had to resign as supervisor due to health concerns. Alice Bullard, has been very involved with the environmental work that has been done lately and was elected to replace her. Please thank Alice (and offer to help) when you next see her.

Membership: John Noble presented his proposed amendment to Bylaw 15. Currently, Bylaw 14 specifies that dues payment are due “in advance on January first, or in four equal installments, each quarter in advance,” and Bylaw 15 says that members “shall be dropped from membership, without advance notice” if payment is not received by April 1. Currently, payments are received each month from January to April, yet the late ones incur no penalty. This process delays admission of new members since number of club vacancies is not firm until well into the year, and in years when there is a lottery for admission to the wait list, the number of spots is not clear until the last minute. John’s proposal is to move the date by which the payments must be received earlier, and institute a short period thereafter during which the member could request reinstatement with payment of a penalty. John will rewrite the proposed amendment based upon the discussion, and a vote will be held next month.

Captain’s Report: Drew Walsh reported that a new roof has been installed above the caretaker’s apartment. Considerable progress had been made in the previous week in addressing the safety concerns. Larry Heilman still feels the stanchions should be placed closer to the water and that there should be greater accountability for ensuring the equipment is always in place. Watch for emails announcing a swim safety event, which may be held in conjunction with another event in order to increase participation.

Treasurers Report: Ned Goddard proposed a plan to repay the building debt early. The debt was to be repaid over the next 5 years. Ned proposed repaying the construction notes in the next three years. This would require \$5,000 more to be paid out in each of the three years, but would save approximately \$3,000 in interest. The construction dues would continue as planned. The motion was carried.

Relief Caretaker’s Report: Jody Benjamin reported by email that she is very grateful to those who volunteered to be relief caretaker so that Joe could have a well-earned day off. In June, the relief caretakers were Terry Topaz, Melanie Clark, Madeleine Carter (Graham), Russ Shaw (Stutman), Jody Benjamin, Susan Dunham and Dan Schember, Rosemary Hart and Craig Iscoe, Charlotte Brewer, and Terry Topaz and Melanie Clark. We’re all very thankful for their help and support.

New Business: David Winer moved that the children’s slide, which was removed for safety reasons, be reinstalled on the swim dock. Dave said that the slide has appealed to children for years and helps them develop self-reliance and outdoor skills and that it is low risk compared to other hazards. The motion carried.

Steve Newman made laminated cards with safety advice which will be placed in appropriate places around the Island.

Jennifer Hearn said that she hoped everyone would speak up in a friendly manner if they see people acting in a way that is not safe. Everyone has to be a lifeguard on the Island.

In response to a question, it was stated that committee supervisors have the authority to act on things within the purview without seeking approval at a meeting unless the action requires funds above their budget or if it is counter to an existing practice.

Jane Winer is planning a dance in late September. She asked for the sense of the meeting as to the possibility of allowing adults to bring their own alcoholic beverage. It was felt that since it is a family event with teenagers, it was not appropriate.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
ANN MARIE CUNNINGHAM
Co-Recording Secretary

Report from USGS

Joe Bell, a hydrologist with the US Geological Survey, gave a well documented report of his latest work during the Club's July meeting. Last year, Joe had engaged the Island regarding a possible new monitoring system to be installed at either Sycamore Island or Rupperts Island. The proposal to change the monitoring instrumentation for Little Falls pumping station to our area of the river is still under consideration but is currently given lower priority by the USGS. On this occasion Joe offered to fill

us in on the interesting water monitoring activities at the Little Falls station, and to share his research findings related to water quality in our part of the river. One of Bell's notable findings is the relationship of road salting runoff through the year with natural leaching of minerals in the Potomac watershed. Joe spoke of planned new techniques to monitor water clarity and other timely conditions, these to be made available on their website.

Islanders asked a number of questions about the research, some surprisingly technical. Mr. Bell had the answers, and received hearty applause as we had to move on to other business of the meeting.

DAVE WINER

Notice of By-Laws Vote


At the Monthly Meeting August 13, we will vote to amend By-Law 15, Expulsion for Non-Payment of Dues, "to change from 'April 1' to 'February 15' the date by which dues must be paid." (Dues are usually billed by January 10 of each new year.) Approval of this amend-



SYCAMORE ISLAND FISHING DERBY

SATURDAY, AUGUST 16TH, 2014
8:30AM - 1:00PM

Club Members, Waitlisters, and Friends--
Please join us for a morning of fishing and fun! A hot lunch will be served at noon. Across from Sycamore Island, Smallmouth Bass, Bluegill, and Catfish are now active on the Virginia shoreline. A few nice Walleyes have been caught, measuring 21".



Please contact George or Shelley Malusky at (301) 871-1707 to confirm your attendance. Hope to see you there!

ment will permit us to finalize membership status and to prepare a timely annual members roster and wait list roster. A change in the By-Laws to this end has been discussed at the two previous Monthly Meetings. This proposal reflects the summary discussion at the most recent meeting.

JOHN NOBLE
Membership Secretary

Captain's Corner

Thank you to Deputy Captain, Steve Newman for leading the design and installation of the new and improved anchoring system for the swim float. Steve's extensive research and design ideas will allow us to winterize the swim float and re-deploy each spring with greater ease. Members Dave Winer, Tryon Wells, Tove Elfstrom, Karl Kosok, and waiting list applicant Rob Forman each lent a hand in this project.

A special thanks to Caretaker Joe Hage, for taking on several projects this summer on his own initiative, including adding a fresh layer of paint on the swim dock and then re-attaching the slide and repairing damaged club canoes. He also has been rehabbing and adding to the brick pathway under the caretakers addition leading to the tool shed. The club thanks and appreciates his efforts.

Roofer Chris Adams not only replaced the small roof over the caretaker's foyer but also helped with some much needed flashing and gutter work that will preserve the clubhouse for years to come. Thank you Chris.

Mathews General Contracting will be replacing damaged and rotted siding from the water damage over the years. MGC is also replacing some rotted window framing around the clubhouse. Joe Hage is working with John Mathews (son of former longtime member and Captain John Mathews) assisting with the caulking and painting in these areas. Thank you John Mathews for prioritizing this work for the club.

Help wanted: if anyone would like to be added to our "special work projects volunteer list" please let me know. There is always something to be done on Sycamore Island to keep things in operation, in addition to new improvements to the club facilities. Please send me an email and I will add you to the list of volunteers whom we email when small projects arise.

Note: waiting-list applicants will receive a future pass to bring yourself and up to 9 guests down to the Island after volunteering for a project. Email me @ andrew.h.walsh@gmail.com.

DREW WALSH
Club Captain

Labor Day Regatta

on the island
Waitlisters and Guests are welcome!



Monday, September 1st
1:30pm - 6pm

2 - 5 pm - Games and Races for all ages

5:30 pm - Dinner and Awards:
Burgers/dogs & fixin's provided by the island
Bring a salad or dessert to share if you can

Contact Cindy Bertaut for more info or to help:
We can always use grill meisters!
301-980-4302 cindybertaut@gmail.com

Notes from the Island

Wednesday, July 2, 2014

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.43 Water Temperature: 80

My computer has been acting up lately so if you don't see any posts from me this month you'll know that the thing died completely.

There were a few people here yesterday trying to beat the heat. Louise Meyer brought her sewing kit and repaired the hole in the hammock, Thanks Louise. I had to climb the tall ladder and replace the pulley that connects the ferry to the safety cable. Today I have plans to rig the telephone line and raise it up higher from the river. The last flood we had made me realize just how vulnerable that cable, is and that we should try to raise it if we can.

If you see me walking around the Island with my head down it just means that I'm still looking for the ring I lost on Sunday. It is silver and about the size of a dime, and very special. If you see it let me know.

There will be a film crew down here today to do some more filming of the new documentary Towpath Joe. It's a little hot but it should be fun, and the film makers are really cool people. They are actually filming me as I type this.

Friday, July 4, 2014

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.45 Water Temperature: 80

Happy Independence Day! It's pretty windy today but we're so lucky to have such a beautiful day for a holiday, especially after the torrential storm we had last night. We didn't lose power last night but we did lose power for four hours this afternoon while they fixed the lines. We really need to get a generator down here.

I just heard that the Park Service cut down another sycamore tree for the crime of having a rope swing tied to it. This tree was down stream from here, near the top of the feeder canal. I never went down there but I heard that it was a great place to swim, and nice and deep for the rope-swingers.

I had to replace the light switch on my living room wall. It was shorting out and when I opened it up there was evidence that it was getting wet. Non coincidentally, that switch is on the same wall that is still missing the exterior siding after it was taken off for the roofing job. I'm still waiting to hear if the roofer is coming back to do the gutters and flashing. I'm also waiting to hear what the plan is to replace the wood siding and

trim on the outside and to fix the ceiling on the inside. I'd be happy to do the carpentry and painting if that's what the club wants.

Tuesday, July 8, 2014

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.45 Water Temperature: 82

It looks like the river is going up a little bit, can't explain it. Maybe there was some rain upstream that I didn't know about.

The storm on last Thursday caused some tree damage. First was the thirty foot box elder that is now bent over and drooping into the field. It's amazing that it bent over so much yet didn't break. I was hoping that it might erect itself but I may have to cut it down. We lost the top of a silver maple at the bottom of the Island but the worst was our huge linden tree on the upper part of the Island. This was a tree of over 80 feet and was the biggest linden tree I have ever seen. Sadly the entire top half of the tree has been broken off. I guess we should feel lucky that the whole tree didn't come down.

I didn't have much luck raising the phone wire over the river. The tension and weight were more than I had anticipated. I'll have to get another come-along to get it where I want it. I did manage to put a new pulley on the back-up chain for the ferry. It's a tough job involving standing on a ladder high above the river with both hands on the pulley, but I got it done.

Things are getting real busy down here now and the weekend was crazy. The fishing is picking up and the weather and water are perfect for swimming. Speaking of swimming, the fun police have taken down the slide that was on the swim dock, boo-hoo. It's too bad there isn't a swim float to swim to.

Friday, July 11, 2014

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.45 Water Temperature: 82

We had two more torrential downpours again this week. Thankfully the rain was mostly local and the river isn't flooding. After the storm on Tuesday we were treated to a double rainbow over the river. Awesome.

We had a guest speaker at the meeting on Wednesday night. Joe Bell from the USGS came down and gave a very interesting talk about the river gauges and the new and improved equipment that will help them monitor all kind of things in the river. He also left two cool maps. They are both of the immediate area around the Island but one is from 1949 and the other is from 2008. I thought that the maps would be left in the



JOE HAGE

clubhouse but I think Drew Walsh took them off Island. I hope he brings them back soon, I never got a chance to look at them.

I was hoping to get some news about the roof work at the meeting but still no word as to when the roof is coming back to finish. We had to put the buckets around the pool table to catch the rain last night. I was also hoping to get a progress report on the swim float.

The canoe dock came apart. The section that is attached to the ramp, disconnected from the other sections. I fastened some 2X6 boards to hold the whole thing together until we come up with a better solution.

Somebody took down the chains and come-alongs that I had rigged on the mainland to hold the ferry-rope pole. Maybe it was the Park Service that didn't like the chains around the tree. Curious.

I had to go out last night and scare the raccoon from my trash can. That hungry coon managed to get her paws into the can but when she tried to pull out the trash bag, all she got was the bag and none of its contents. Poor coon.

Monday, July 14, 2014

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.3 Water Temperature: 86

Things always seem to slow down a bit in mid July, compared to June that is. I think a lot of people leave town at this time of year. It was like a ghost town here yesterday during the soccer match. Who knew that D.C. had so many World Cup fans?

The controversial water slide was voted on at the last meeting and it was decided to put the slide back up on the dock. I didn't get around to putting it back up over

the weekend so I guess I'll do that this week.

I tried out the new lawn mower that Drew brought down. It's not a brand new mower but it's really heavy duty. (And I mean heavy, this thing weighs three times as much as the other mower.) It cuts well and it looks like it will last us for a while.

The evil kudzu has reared its ugly head near the head of the Island. Of all the invasive vines that we have to contend with, the kudzu is the most feared. I spent a while yanking and pulling at the stuff but I'm sure it will be back. We just have to stay on top of it so it doesn't take over the Island.

The old canoe cart that was built over 15 years ago by Captain John Matthews has finally given up the ghost. It was a marvelous invention and it served us well over the years. We're working on getting a replacement but it's a little sad to lose that old connection to the past.

I took the ladder down from the tree house. I've decided that the treehouse is not safe the way it is now.

I planted another Sycamore at the bottom of the Island. That makes two trees that I transplanted from Mary's yard. I hope they survive.

Wednesday, July 16, 2014

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.7 Water Temperature: 80

Holy cow that was a lot of rain yesterday. Not to mention the downpour we had on Monday. The river shot up to over four feet on the Little Falls gauge and you could see the brown run-off coming past the Island. There was a perfect delineation between the clear river and the storm water entering the river. Of course the flooded creeks delivered the usual assortment of trash and debris.

Normally it would float right past but yesterday the wind was blowing up river so once the trash reach the ferry the wind kept it from going any further, not pretty.

The river is now not fit for swimming and the fishing is shot for at least a week. The fishing was just getting good too, I caught my first three small bass on Monday night.

Friday, July 18, 2014

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.3 Water Temperature: 80

I was told on Tuesday that the roofer was coming back today to finish the work, but then I got this email from Drew just now at 11:00 a.m. "The roofer is now scheduled to return to continue the roof and gutter repair work Tuesday / Wednesday of next week (weather and schedule permitting)."

Are you kidding me? How long is this going to go on?

Tuesday, July 22, 2014

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.1 Water Temperature: 80

I can't say that I'm surprised, but Chris Adams, the roofer isn't here yet. I can't believe that the Club hasn't fired this guy, especially after he called me an a**hole and blamed me for the rain on the floor in my house.

Wednesday, July 23, 2014

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.1 Water Temperature: 80

The latest from Drew Walsh, my Captain "I am going to follow up again with Chris Adams in the morning. But hope to have him deliver materials Thursday at least. If not Friday a.m. when he plans to work. Will keep you posted. Can you please do a once over of the bathrooms and toilets before my mom's birthday party on Friday?"

Friday, July 25, 2014

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.1 Water Temperature: 80

Drew told me this morning that I should not expect the roofer until Monday at the earliest.

Wednesday, July 30, 2014

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.1 Water Temperature: 80

I was betting against it, but the roofer actually showed up on Monday and they finished up yesterday. Finally. Now we just have to wait for the carpenter to replace all the trim and siding.

JOE HAGE
Caretaker

**DON'T MISS THE BEGINNING
OF A GREAT TRADITION**

A Saturday Night Island Social Fall Dance Concert

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27,
7-10 P.M.**

IF YOU'VE GOT THE TIME, BABY,
WE'VE GOT THE ISLAND
SO BRING YOUR BEST DATE AND
COME ALONG TO DANCE OR JUST LISTEN
TO THE MUSIC OF

BG AND THE MOJOS

COME EARLY • BRING SNACKS TO SHARE •
AND BYOP (BRING YOUR OWN POP) • WE'LL
OFFER PIZZA & DRINKS

**QUESTIONS? LIKE TO
HELP? CONTACT:**

ROBIN RICHTER
202.226.1355

JANE WINER
JDWINER@VERIZON.NET 301.229.8963

Large Parties Scheduled



August 31, John Noble, 30 people, 4pm-dusk

The Sycamore Islander

6613 80th Place
Cabin John, MD 20818

ADDRESS SERVICES REQUESTED

FIRST CLASS MAIL



DAVID WINER



DAVID WINER

Children of waitlisters having a good time on the Island's new swing. This swing has a strong galvanized steel cable coming down from a sycamore limb and converts to a comfortable one-inch manila rope to hold on to. The wooden seat is the same one that was on the old swing. This new version is already a popular feature on the Island. At left is Portia Castro-Catalone, at right is Brayden Castro-Catalone.

Masthead photo by Dan Seligman