



The Sycamore Islander

JANUARY 2015 | VOLUME 94 NUMBER 1

Minutes for the December 10th Meeting

Attendees: Lucky Marmon, Alan Gelb, John Membrino, Caroline Gelb, Karen B. Possner, Mary Tisdale, Steve Newman, Jane Winer, Jody Benjamin, Diane Noble, Louise Meyer, David Winer, John Lentz, Judy Lentz, Meredith Griggs, Stan Wiggins, John Noble, Edward ?????, Sherry Fizdale, Christine Henny, Ned Goddard, Jeff Komarow, Cecily Abram, Robin Richter, Bill Eichbaum, Bruce Gaber, Renee Dunham, Star Mitchell, Marianne and Phil Ross, and Jim Drew.

Call to Order and Minutes: The meeting was called to order by President Bill Marmon at the lovely home of Diane and John Noble. The minutes of the November meeting were approved.

Nominating: Ann Marie Cunningham read the nominees for officer and supervisory positions, and thanked those that are continuing in their previous roles as well

as the new folks who are stepping up to assume new responsibilities. There were special commendations to Bill Marmon for his service as president. Tryon Wells was recognized for stepping up to that role. The complete slate was printed in the November *Islander*.

Treasurers Report: Ned Goddard reported that volunteers and our Caretaker did a lot of work on the Island this year. There were repairs and upgrades to the Caretaker's Quarters and many purchases, including a new lawnmower, tools, and safety equipment. Our primary asset is our Caretaker, who, with the help of many volunteers, helped to minimize costs. Despite their efforts, expenditures exceeded the budget. However, due to the lottery that brought in additional revenue from new members selected from the waiting list, we were close to revenue neutral in 2014. Ned noted that there will be no lottery in 2015 to bring in this extra revenue, even though our current costs need to be maintained to protect our facilities and support our Caretaker.

Ned promised that he will be vigilant and “hold the line” on expenditures in the 2015 budget but that a small increase in dues will be necessary, which has been discussed in previous meetings. He recommended an increase of 5%, the first increase in two years, applied to all dues and fees. The regular dues will increase from \$358 to \$375, senior dues and waiting list passes from \$179 to \$188, and the waiting list fee from \$30 to \$32. Members with any questions relating to the budget should contact the treasurer. The budget was approved.

Ned also reported that he expected a refund with interest from the County for being overcharged for solid waste removal. He expressed gratitude at the confidence that he has received.

Captain’s Report: Drew Walsh reported that there was a low turnout for the workfest, possibly because there had not been an email reminder sent to all. He is considering a new rule to encourage volunteerism, in addition to the current one that allows folks on the wait list to earn a pass to use the Island.

Drew was commended for his hard work and creative ideas in maintaining our Island paradise.

Print version of *The Islander*: As a result of the announcement in the December *Islander* to cease printing and mailing of the print version of *The Islander*, John Noble volunteered to looking into printing costs that would be passed directly to those who wish to continue receiving it. A motion was passed to continue the current mailing until February. This gives John the time to look into options and for notification to those who currently receive the print version.

Relief Caretaker’s Report: Jody Benjamin reported that Kathy Carroll, Penelope Mitchell, Christy and Garth Ross, John Lord, Joe and Tammy Belden, and Greg Hitz have served as caretakers since the last meeting. We are grateful to those who it make possible for us to enjoy the Island.

We expressed our gratitude to John and Diane Noble for their hospitality. The meeting was adjourned so that we could all enjoy each other’s company and the tasty refreshments that had been contributed.

Respectfully submitted,
ANN MARIE CUNNINGHAM
Co-Recording Secretary

Notes from the Island

Wednesday, December 31, 2014

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.5 Water Temperature: 40
Happy New Year Sycamorians!!

Keep the river clean in 2015!!

I guess that we should all collectively knock on wood and breath a sigh of relief. We got through another year and hurricane season without a major flood and so far this year there is zero snow pack in the mountains. I probably shouldn’t jinx it but except for that sudden flood last May, the past year has been a good one as far as river levels and river flooding.

Another reason to be thankful is that the Park Service has finished resurfacing the towpath from Lock 5 to Lock 7. I don't know how we ended up being the lucky ones to get a new surface on our 2 miles out of 184, but it is a really big improvement. I can recall past efforts at resurfacing that left the towpath covered in muddy clay with round river stones. This new material is more sandy, making for a much better path.

Speaking of the Canal Trust, Mary and I stayed at Lock House 22 recently, otherwise known as Pennifeild Lock. There is no electricity and no plumbing, but it was a great experience. It was a joy waking up on the river and hiking up the towpath to Seneca Breaks. That makes five separate lock houses that Mary and I have slept in: 6, 10, 22, 28, 49. We’ll be sleeping in lock houses again in May, 2015 as we plan another canoe trip down the Potomac. We’ll keep you posted.

It’s winter on the Island and we have started to use the wood stove in the clubhouse. The fire is nice but it keeps us very busy gathering kindling and splitting firewood.

The critters that we least want to see on the Island are those pesky beavers. They continue to wreak havoc, not only on Sycamore Island, but also on our sister island, Ruppert’s. Sadly, they have now even hunted down some of the bigger trees that we thought might be too big for their ravenous and powerful teeth.

Finally, it looks like I will be forced to shut down the water to the clubhouse this week. The temperatures are dropping and the pipes over there are vulnerable to freezing. Fear not, there will be one bathroom (the men’s room) that will be “winterized.”

See you on the river.

JOE HAGE
Caretaker



7th Annual Winter Bird Walk

Saturday, February 21, 2015

- o Popular tradition for members
- o Begin at 7:30 AM with bagels and coffee at the clubhouse
- o Walk the Island and the towpath 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m
- o Winter waterfowl and migratory songbirds
- o For beginners and experienced birders
- o Compare notes over coffee around the wood stove

Please contact our trip leader Paul Hagen at phagen@bdlaw.com or 202-789-6022 by February 18. Bring binoculars if you have them and dress for the weather.



The Sycamore Islander

6613 80th Place
Cabin John, MD 20818

ADDRESS SERVICES REQUESTED

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Happy New Year

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

| Saturday Relief Caretakers January/February 2015 | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| JANUARY | 11 A.M.–SUNSET | FEBRUARY | 11 A.M.–SUNSET |
| JANUARY 3 | Trip Reid | FEBRUARY 7 | David and Sharon Gustafson |
| JANUARY 10 | Avi Garbow (Anderson) | FEBRUARY 14 | Meredith Griggs |
| JANUARY 17 | Meredith Griggs | FEBRUARY 21 | Vicki Judson |
| JANUARY 24 | Penelope Mitchell | FEBRUARY 28 | Please Volunteer |
| JANUARY 31 | Wayne Limberg | | |

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 February issue is January 31.