



The Sycamore Islander

DECEMBER 2015 | VOLUME 94 NUMBER 12

Minutes for the November 11 Meeting

Attendees: Ann Marie Cunningham, Richard Bertaut, Steve Newman, John Membrino, John Noble, Drew Walsh, Tryon Wells, Bill Marmon, Lucky Marmon, Star Mitchell, Cathy Carroll, Jim Drew, Ned Goddard, Joe Hage

President Tryon Wells called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m.

Minutes: The September Minutes were unanimously approved. Notes taken at the October meeting did not need approval as there was not a quorum present and, therefore, not an official meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Ned Goddard reported that the Sycamore Island Club's financial picture is revenue neutral—our revenues taken in the beginning of the year look to meet our operating expenses throughout the year for 2015. However, due to an unplanned

accounting change with respect to the Caretaker's withholding taxes in the final quarter of this year as requested by the IRS (filing Fed, SS and State W/H the end of each month, rather than the end of each quarter), any expected surplus will go to making these payments in this budget year, rather than in January of 2016.

The club's annual budget traditionally reflects an increase over the previous year by the US Consumer Price Index (1.7% in 2014). This year the CPI was 0.2%, reflecting the economy's sluggish performance. Consequently, Ned presented the 2016 Annual Budget similar to last year's budget. The proposed 2016 MSIC Budget maintains few adjustments in operational expenses of all lines (including Insurance and Employee payroll and benefits), with slight decrease to the facilities budget line—\$10,000 vs. \$13,000 last year, a figure that was used in prior years to fund the club facilities' needs.

The good news is that there will be no dues increase for 2016, as next year is a membership lottery year,

which is traditionally a year that Club builds reserves to maintain one year of operating expenses (approximately \$85,000). Based on discussions in the last club meetings, Ned recommends the club devote any 2016 surplus to reserves as has been done in the past, as he received no new requests from the committees to increase their 2016 budget lines. He emphasized that he was willing to discuss and accommodate any compelling request of any committee for funding any increase or new expenditures in 2016 not appearing in the budget.

He noted that our membership revenues have grown more slowly than our operational expenses, and he emphasized fiscal prudence and responsibility, as has been the club's fiscal practice in the past. John Noble urged us not to adhere too strictly to the policy of keeping a year's budget in reserve. There are projects, he emphasized, that should be taken care of to keep the grounds and club house from deteriorating. Ned agreed. "If something comes up, we could fund it," he said.

Membership Report: Membership Chairman John Noble reported that there will be at least 15 openings for the wait list at the time of the April 1 lottery. That number could increase if some members fail to pay their dues in by the February 15th deadline or retire from membership. The following are the next ten persons/families on the waitlist, who will likely become members. They are: Nicole Fraser and Harley Feldbaum, Sharon and David Gustafson, Julia Strasser and Andrew Cassidy, Rodolfo and Caroline Castro, Robin and Florian Kogelnik, Peter and Charlotte Dean, Sarah Fraidin and Stephen Roggie, Drew Schaumber, Michael Beer and Latanja Thomas. John will contact these people and urge them to round up their two endorsements by members.

John noted that in the previous lottery there were 100 applicants in the 40-years-old and under group, and 200 applicants ages 41 and up. We now have 45 persons on the wait list. This year's lottery will open to applicants on January 1, 2016. The application is online. John gave notice that applicants will not receive confirmation that their applications have been received. Some attendees wondered how those wishing to join the club would know about the lottery. Most people stated that the news spread swiftly by word of mouth. Lucky Marmon put it on her town list serve. Richard Young's proposal, made at the September meeting on the Island, to amend Standing Rules to

allow members' children to bypass the lottery system, thus fast-tracking them for the wait list and club membership was discussed and voted down nine to three.

New Business: Ann Marie Cunningham noted that senior members have the right to vote at club meetings, but the by-laws don't specifically allow it. She proposed an amendment to the by-laws, which made it clear that senior members can vote. It was seconded and approved unanimously.

Captain's Report: Captain Drew Walsh expressed concern about the huge fallen tree by the Old Trestle Bridge. He suggested calling the County at 311 to find out if they had plans to dispose of the tree.

New Business: Cathy Carroll recommended purchasing new kayak paddles.

Caretaker Joe Hage received praised for stories, such as the "Fox and the Deer," that appear in his log in *The Islander*.

Relief Caretakers' Report: Relief Caretaker Supervisors Jody and Bobby Benjamin wish to thank the following for substitute caretaking during the past month: James Hess and Betsy Cody, Jonathan Rose, David Lyles, Ashley Baquie, Kevin Haley, Madeleine Carter (Graham), Julie Saulnier and Mark Friedrichs, Meredith Griggs, Patricia Benton, David and Emily Powell.

The next meeting and Holiday Party will take place on Wednesday, December 9th at 8:00 p.m. at the home of Lynda and Gary Slayen, 6605 Rivercrest Court in Mohican Hills. Club members and club applicants are invited to attend. Please bring a dish to share.

Directions: From the club parking lot, turn left onto MacArthur Boulevard, towards Glen Echo. Take the first right (past Walhounding) onto Mohican Road. Go up the hill and turn left at the stop sign. Stay left to Rivercrest Court.

Respectfully submitted,
LUCKY MARMON
Co-Recording Secretary

Notes from the Island

Thursday, November 12, 2015

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.2 Water Temperature: 54
The documentary film, *Towpath Joe*, was been chosen to screen at the Community Stories Festival, Films about Montgomery County.

Wednesday, November 18, 2015

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.4 Water Temperature: 51
What a great time we had at the workfest this last Sunday!

It seems that we're getting better at bringing in the docks and the new plastic dock made it easy to get all the docks out of the water before 1:00!

Drew and Steve Newman led the dock crews, Ned chopped wood, Tryon built shelves, Rodolfo rebuilt the steps at the landing, Jody painted the small roofs above the screen doors, Cathy Carroll and her daughter, Becca, washed all the windows in the clubhouse, Lynda and Star shined up the club kitchen and of course, George cooked all the food. We also had some wonderful side dishes that the members brought, including Star's famous brownies.

There was also a large crew of members eradicating invasive plants. They pulled up the kudzu and dug up the Japanese knotweed. And Susan Dunham cleared all of the trails. It looks like we're ready for winter.

I had another strange animal sighting. For the first time ever, I saw a cottontail rabbit on the Island! It scurried away as I stepped out the other night just after dark. I wonder how long it can survive out here.

Sunday, November 29, 2015

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.3 Water Temperature: 48
Good weather means big crowds on the Island. Friday was especially busy and it was fun to see all the waitlisters down here taking advantage of a weekday holiday and the balmy weather.

Monday, November 30, 2015

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.3 Water Temperature: 48
We know that the cold is on the way because we had a migrating Common Loon passing through here yesterday. It's called a Common Loon but it is very rare to see one here at Sycamore Island. Fall migration is the only time that we see this fabled bird. We also saw our first migrating Buffle-head Ducks! Winter is coming!



Jimson Weed seed pod



Persimmon Tree fruit on Ruppert's

Mary and I paddled up to Ruppert's yesterday. I think it's a good idea to go up there and check on things regularly. Ruppert's Island used to be known as Indian Island, and I always have a sense of mystery and anticipation when I go there.

We parked the canoe at the bottom end and walked the length of the Island. It looks pretty good, not a lot of trash or evidence of fishing camps. One issue of concern is the amount of the oriental bittersweet up there. Those vines have the potential of taking over all of the other vegetation.

One surprise we had while we were there was seeing the osage orange trees and their large green fruit scattered all over the ground. Osage orange isn't a rare tree but there aren't many of them around these parts. They remind me of my early childhood home back in Kentucky.

JOE HAGE
Caretaker

Come to the
SYCAMORE ISLAND
Holiday Party

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9TH

8:00 P.M.

at the home of

LYNDA and GARY SLAYEN

6605 RIVER CREST COURT, BETHESDA

The Sycamore Islander

6613 80th Place
Cabin John, MD 20818

ADDRESS SERVICES REQUESTED

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Happy Holidays

workfest

Photos by David Winer



Masthead photo by Joe Hage



DAVID WINER

