



# *The Sycamore Islander*

FEBRUARY 2016 | VOLUME 95 NUMBER 2

## Minutes for the January 13th Meeting

The off-Island meeting was held in the gracious home of members Madeline Carter and Alec Graham in Glen Echo. Excellent refreshments! President Tryon Wells called the meeting to order at 8:15.

**Attendees:** Sherry Fisdale, Jim Drew, Karen Possner, Marianne Ross, Drew Walsh, Meredith Griggs, John Membrino, Robin Richter, Vicki Judson, Jane Winer, Jerry Barton, Bill Marmon, Madeline Carter, Alec Graham, Ann Marie Cunningham, Ned Goddard, John Noble, and Robin Kogelnik.

Minutes of the December 2015 meeting, as printed in *The Islander*, were approved by unanimous vote.

**Old Business:** Archivist Karen Possner reported that she would be making the annual deposit of archival materials with the Washington Historical society and requested delivery to her of any archival materials.

**Captain's Report:** Captain Drew Walsh reported no new activity on the Island as is typical in winter.

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Ned Goddard reported that 2016 dues notices had been mailed and reminded members that the deadline this year for payment is February 15th.

**Membership:** Membership Secretary John Noble reported that long time member Ann Lucy, 71, died

December 31st after a fall. Jane Winer gave a thoughtful tribute to Ann Lucy.

Noble further reported three resignations, including the resignation of John and Jennifer Glaudemans, who have moved to the Eastern Shore. and he read portions of lovely letter they wrote about their appreciation of the Island.

Noble noted that the window for new wait list applications has opened and that 10 applications have been received. The application window remains open until March 31st.

**Relief Caretaking:** Scheduling Supervisor Jody Benjamin reports with a Huzzah that the following have recently done relief caretaker duty: Barbara Fisher, Meredith Griggs, Sandi and Jeff Komarow, and Mary Ann Stein. Eric and Amy Aaserud volunteered but were kept off the Island by high water on January 2.

**New Business:** President Wells reviewed activities for the upcoming year, which include:

- Winter Bird Walk—February 20
- Spring Workfest—April 10, rain date April 17
- Spring flower walk—date to be determined
- Orientation for new wait list members—John Noble, sometime in May–June
- Summer Solstice party and Camp Out—tentatively June 19
- Fishing derby—August, date to be determined, need to check with George Malusky
- Regatta—Labor Day, September 5
- Club Party—with Robin Richter in charge, sometime in mid-to-late September
- Old Timers lunch—Lucky Marmon, October, date to be determined
- Fall Workfest—November 13, rain date November 20
- Christmas Party—December 14

There was discussion about a paddle board activity and canoe training class.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:39.

Respectfully submitted,

BILL MARMON

Substitute Recording Secretary

## A Remembrance of Ann Lucy

About twenty years ago, David and I met Ann Lucy because of our interest in birdwatching. Ann lived near the Wild Bird Center on MacArthur Boulevard where we met up with enthusiasts on Saturdays for the early morning bird walks. She was an advanced birder teaching herself to bird “by ear,” which made being with her our good fortune. Of course she would love to join us for a Bird Paddle from Sycamore Island, and we were not surprised shortly thereafter when she agreed that she must become a member. She wanted to learn to fly-fish and David happily taught her what he knew of the sport and we all celebrated her award for Smallest Catch of the Day, a headliner of George Malusky’s fabulous Fishing Derby Day. In due time, we heard about her son Shahab Farzanegan who was just beginning a career in fishing and guiding, a pursuit that has taken him from Bethesda to Oregon as Coordinator of Aquatic and Angler Education for the State Department of Fish and Wildlife in Salem.

Ann was divorced from Shahab’s father many years ago and subsequently made a career for herself as a Certified Public Accountant, a very good one, who worked with a small group of clients. When she had time, she traveled to see birds and made many forays with friends from the Montgomery Bird Club. Even before spring hit, she listened for birdsong wherever she was, her own backyard—hearing the first warblers come through was the prize. As seasons passed we became aware that in very early spring, Ann migrated a bit herself: Tax Time! Her clients came first, slightly ahead of the birds. We tried to lure her over for supper at our house and pointed out that she had to eat, somewhere, sometime! Turns out Ann was also a wonderful cook but eschewed cookery books . . . if she liked something, she would analyze the dish then go home and cook it up! She loved to share her delights: discovering *vinho verde*, a loaf of bread from Praline when it first opened, a special bar of soap . . . a backscratcher!

Over time, we learned Ann was a woman of many parts. A member of a tennis club, she had a ferocious net game. In recent years, in a series of accidents, she broke bones too often, too seriously. When she seemed to be getting better, I thought I might hear again about tennis, but she had given up Edgemoor membership, and recently she resigned from the Conservation Committee on the Island. A friend gave her a kitten, Kit

Kat, and then, suddenly, she had fallen again and when we visited, she talked about moving to Oregon to live near Shahab. This summer she seemed stronger and invited me to join her and friends at The Market in Cabin John on Wednesdays mornings, a gathering that included Islander Meredith Griggs. Most recently, it was Shahab who joined us there to talk about Ann, his Mom, her life and her unexpected death on New Year's Eve. We all miss Ann now, the lovely woman who lived her life "by ear."

JANE WINER

### Cold Water Will Kill You

This information is from "Cold Water Boating: Real Men Try to Avoid It" by Captain Art Pine in the November 2014 boating magazine *Prop Talk*. The article is posted on the club bulletin board near the kitchen door entrance.

Even if water is near 60 degrees you risk shock and hypothermia if you fall in.

Cold water boating isn't really macho. It is risky, even if you wear anti-exposure coveralls or a drysuit. If you fall in you risk conditions that can kill you outright or at least sharply reduce your ability to survive.

#### Shock

If you fall in you experience an immediate shock that brings on a sudden gasp that can set off severe hyperventilation. Your airway becomes locked and if your face is immersed you can inhale water and drown. Risk of hyperthermia is high, heart rate plummets, breathing rate and blood pressure soar. Within 10 minutes you start to lose muscle coordination and cannot use fingers, arms, and legs. Swimming is impossible

#### Hypothermia

The risk is hypothermia. After 30 minutes, the body loses heat so rapidly that it cannot maintain normal temperature. You start to shiver. Blood flows to vital organs—brain, heart, and lungs—bypassing other areas. Your body shuts down, you become lethargic and lose consciousness. Next step, DEATH.

Water at 60 degrees can affect your ability to func-

## 8TH ANNUAL WINTER BIRD WALK

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20TH



Pied-billed Grebe

Please join us for the club's Eighth Annual Sycamore Island Winter Bird Walk scheduled for Saturday, February 20, 2016. Our outing will begin at 8:00 a.m. with bagels and coffee at the clubhouse.

Our plan is to walk the Island and the towpath in the vicinity of the Island from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. looking for visiting winter waterfowl and other resident and migratory songbirds. Following the walk, we will compare notes on the day's sightings over coffee around the wood stove at the clubhouse. Both beginners and experienced birders are encouraged to join us.

In past years, participants have been rewarded with good looks at numerous resident and migratory birds, including: Wood Duck, Ring-neck Duck, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser,

Common Merganser, Horned and Pied-billed grebes, Blue Birds, and

most of our local woodpeckers. Our resident Bald Eagles usually start to nest this time of year just down river in a Sycamore tree that is also easily seen from the Island. If you would like to attend this year's walk, please contact our trip leader Paul Hagen at [phagen@bdlaw.com](mailto:phagen@bdlaw.com) or 202 789 6022 by February 18. Bring binoculars if you have them and dress for the weather.

## How Hypothermia Affects Most Adults

Water temperature (Fahrenheit)	Exhaustion or unconsciousness	Expected time of Survival
32.5 degrees	Under 15 minutes	Under 15 to 45 minutes
32.5 to 40 degrees	15 to 30 minutes	30 to 90 minutes
40 to 50 degrees	30 to 60 minutes	1 to 3 hours
50 to 60 degrees	1 to 2 hours	1 to 6 hours
60 to 70 degrees	2 to 7 hours	2 to 4 hours
70 to 80 degrees	2 to 12 hours	3 hours to indefinite
Over 80 degrees	Indefinite	Indefinite

*Note:* Sycamore Island Club Standing Rules 6.c: Club canoes or boats cannot be used if the river level is 5 feet or higher, or if the water temperature is below 55 degrees fahrenheit.

tion. Below 50 degrees is really risky. In January our water is so cold that you could fall off a dock and not be able to swim back..

### Hints

Wear warm clothes, especially wool.

Cover head, neck, wrists, and feet.

Wear a life jacket (PFD). This means that you float, and save energy and live longer.

No alcohol. It hastens hypothermia.

Wear a survival suit. Below 50 degrees the Coast Guards wear full-fledged drysuits.

Train your crew on cold weather boating and what to do if fall into water.

### If you fall into the cold water

1. Cover nose and mouth (to prevent inhaling water), Keep head above water.
2. Keep calm, control breathing, Think about what to do next.
3. Get out of the water, out of the wind, try to get dry.
4. Don't try to swim to shore. Draw knees together, arms against sides, head back with face out of water. Remember H E L P, Heat Escape Lessening Position.

### If you rescue someone

Keep them from exertion to save energy

Wrap in dry clothes, warm blankets

Shelter from wind and water

No alcohol

Call medical help immediately.

GERRY BARTON

## Notes from the Island

**Monday, January 4, 2016**

**Water Level at Little Falls: 4.4 Water Temperature: 44**

The sun is shining but it seems like winter has arrived. The wind is bitter cold with whitecaps on the river. Pulling the ferry across the river this morning reminded me of riding on a long ski lift high up in the cold, snowy mountains of Utah. BRRRRR.

I'm glad that Mary and I got a little canoeing in before this cold snap. Yesterday we braved the wind and paddled up past Ruppert's Island and into the small channel between Chatauqua Island and the Maryland shore; the river was about 4.5 feet. We passed Lockhouse 7 until the channel came to a dead end where Minnehaha creek comes out from under the canal.

Normally we would turn around here and go back the way we came, but yesterday I suggested doing a little portage. If we carried the canoe over the large gravel bar and past all of the huge pieces of driftwood we could be floating again where the channel resumed upstream (between Chatauqua Island and Cabin John Island, about fifty yards away). Mary agreed to the adventure and we had little problem carrying the empty kevlar canoe over land. Along the way we spotted some interesting river trash which turned out to be a little, wheeled canoe caddie in perfect shape!

We continued upstream, hugging the shore of Cabin John Island to our right. We entered Cabin John creek soon after and paddled as far as we could up that stream, with Cedar Island on our left and Cabin John Island on our right.



JOE HAGE

The sun had dropped below the trees by then, but the return trip was a short one, with a fast-moving river and some powerful wind gusts at our backs. It was a great little outing but we were glad to get back to our favorite Island, Sycamore.

**Tuesday, January 5, 2016**

**Water Level at Little Falls: 4.1 Water Temperature: 40**

In the corner of my spare bedroom/storage room there is a closet that houses all of the well stuff, pump, filters, pressure tank, etc. When the renovation was done over five years ago they built a plywood enclosure around all that stuff so that when I needed to get in there I had to remove the plywood. Well, when Ned was here during my vacation he suggested framing out the closet and putting in a closet door to make it easier to access the well stuff.

It had never occurred to me to put in a door, but I thought it was a good idea and yesterday I did just that.

The coolest thing about it is that I didn't have to go to the hardware store or spend any money to get the job done. All the materials I needed were right here on the Island. I found an interior door, door knob, hinges, latch, 2 x 4's for framing, nails, screws and plywood for walls. I even had the paint and primer for the finishing! The job is all done and I think Ned, our financial secretary, would appreciate that I didn't have to spend any money or put any strain on the budget. Thanks for the inspiration Ned, I love my new closet door.

**Monday, January 11, 2016**

**Water Level at Little Falls: 5.1 Water Temperature: 40**

The ferry is closed due to rising river levels.

I guess we can't complain, last year at this time the river was frozen and we were skating on the canal.



JOE HAGE

**Tuesday, January 12, 2016**

**Water Level at Little Falls: 5.2 Water Temperature: 40**

The river is still over five feet , just barely, so the ferry will be closed again today and probably tomorrow as well.

Often, the best time to walk around the Island is just before it gets dark, and last night was a good example. I got to the bottom of the Island just in time to witness the arrival of about fifty Canada geese as they came in to roost for the night.

It was cool to watch, or rather listen, as they took turns landing in groups of six or eight. The geese fly low and make no sound during their approach, so in the dim light the first thing I noticed, or heard, was the sound of their webbed feet skimming across the water as they landed. After they had landed, they proceeded to swim, single-file, up the channel to my left. It was amazing to be there, surrounded by the swollen river, with a parade of silent geese to my left and a crescent

moon hanging low on my right.

This week I've been beefing up some of the insulation under my quarters and securing some rat holes around the foundation. (I had to trap a rat last week. It was a wood rat and I got her in the Have-A-Heart trap and deported her to Virginia.) I think I made a difference with the insulation and the spray-foam that I used. I also feel good about sealing up some gaps in the crawl spaces below my living room. Today I plan to do some caulking from the inside.

**Wednesday, January 13, 2016**

**Water Level at Little Falls: 4.9 Water Temperature: 36**

The river has gone down and the ferry is open!

**Monday, January 18, 2016**

**Water Level at Little Falls: 4.3 Water Temperature: 36**

It may not be a polar vortex but it sure is cold out there!

## SAVE THE DATE!!!



John Parrish and RG Steinman will again lead this spring's

# *Sycamore Island Wildflower Walk*

Sunday, April 3rd

10:00 to 2:00—RAIN or SHINE!

Please join us. We will provide the details as the plan unfolds.

Thoughts, queries, or suggestions, email rg at lifeonurth@gmail.com.

I suppose that this goes without saying but I winterizing the Island and I turned off the water to the clubhouse and to the ladies bathroom. The men's room is still heated and if you need water you can get it from the tap in there.

I had a little trouble trying to winterize the clubhouse this time. It seems that one of the shut-off valves was not working and I couldn't get the water to stop dripping. Of course, I called our plumber, reliable Charlie King, and he came down and installed a new valve. Thanks Charlie!

I forgot to mention some of the new acquisitions down here. Gerry Barton carried down a large microwave oven to use in the club kitchen and Marianne Ross brought down a nice looking four-piece toaster. Paul Hagen was here before the end of the year and brought us a handsome wooden bench for the deck. Thanks guys, we appreciate the effort! (Sorry I didn't mention it earlier.)

It's cold now but this mild winter has made it easier to get some little projects done around the Island. After insulating all of the crawl spaces, I repaired some of the brick walkways, fixed a sticky doorknob, placed chicken wire around some vulnerable trees, cleaned the storage area for the lumber, and organized all of our surplus lumber. I cleaned out the lost-and-found and finished some of the leaf-raking that didn't get done during the workfest. I even used John Matthews' trick of piling up

leaves around the foundation of the clubhouse to keep the wind from blowing up under my floorboards. Oh, and I caught another rat, hopefully not the same one.

**Tuesday, January 19, 2016**

**Water Level at Little Falls: 4.1 Water Temperature: 32**

It's cold enough for the river to freeze but luckily it's very windy and so far ice hasn't formed. There are a bunch of ice chunks sailing by but hopefully the wind will keep up until the weather warms up a little bit. Otherwise I'll be stuck chopping ice.

In the summer it's "I get to live on an island". In winter it's "I have to live on an island".

**Wednesday, January 20, 2016**

**Water Level at Little Falls: 4.1 Water Temperature: 32**

The river is frozen and the ferry is closed. What a drag.

JOE HAGE  
Caretaker

# The Sycamore Islander

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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](mailto:benjafamily@gmail.com).

Saturday Relief Caretakers <b>February / March 2016</b>				
FEBRUARY	11 A.M. – DUSK	MARCH	10 A.M. – 2 P.M.	2 P.M. – DUSK
FEBRUARY 6	Joe and Tammy Belden	MARCH 5	Avi Garbow	<b>Please Volunteer</b>
FEBRUARY 13	Ned Goddard	MARCH 12	Meredith Griggs	<b>Please Volunteer</b>
FEBRUARY 20	Lisa Hemmer	MARCH 19	<b>Please Volunteer</b>	Mary Ellen and Peter Levine
FEBRUARY 27	Eric Simpson	MARCH 26	<b>Please Volunteer</b>	<b>Please Volunteer</b>

*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. Text and graphics may be sent as email attachments to:  
Carol Beehler  
[cbeehler@comcast.net](mailto:cbeehler@comcast.net)  
The deadline for inclusion in the March issue is February 27.

