



# *The Sycamore Islander*

JULY 2016 | VOLUME 95 NUMBER 7

## A Friendly Gathering on June 8, 2016

Due to lack of a quorum, the June meeting was not held. However, there was an interesting discussion by those who sat on the Captain's float and watched the sunset.

**Attendees:** Meredith Griggs, Karen Possner, Vicky Judson, John Noble, Tryon Wells, Joe Hage, Ned Goddard, and Ann Marie Cunningham.

We were all a bit sad that the solstice party will not happen this year. Vicky Judson was unable to find help planning this overnight event, celebrated by entire families, which was begun by our former caretaker Doc Talliaferro and his wife Phyllis.

**Treasurer's Report:** Ned Goddard reported that our long-time Financial Secretary, Lisa Kleifoth, had collected just over \$101,000 since January 1 of this year in dues, guest card fees, initiation fees, and other fees. This is less than the \$105,000 of revenue in the 2016 budget, and since the bulk of fees has been collected, Ned is concerned that the difference will not be made up. There have already been some significant, unexpected expenses this year—\$5,000 to fill the old well that was discovered near the captain's float and an increase in flood insurance from \$7,000 to \$10,000—as well as lesser increases in other insurance. Ned, in concert with our Captain Drew Walsh and Caretaker Joe Hage, is focused on preventive maintenance in order to reduce

the likelihood of major maintenance expenses. Despite this, and because there was no dues increase this year, it is likely that there will be one next year.

**Membership Report:** John Noble reported that he has offered membership to 16 families this year. One declined, three have deferred membership until later this year or next, two became inactive members as they are temporarily living outside the area, and ten are new regular members. Orientations, which are necessary for waitlisters to attend before they can become members, will be held June 12 and June 26. The membership profile now has the maximum of 160 regular members, as well as 72 senior members, 18 inactive, 15 honorary, and 63 wait list (of which 21 have chosen to purchase passes.)

**Relief Caretaker Scheduler's Report:** Madeleine Carter reported by email her enduring gratitude to those who volunteered to pull the ferry since May. We all appreciate the help and support that Christopher White, Parker Moore, Molly Newberry, Lucky Marmon, Peter Jones, Ned Goddard, Susan Dunham, Dan Sember, Mary—TWICE!!, Kerri Cox and kids, Jody Benjamin, Robin Kogelnik, Bob and Barbara McCartney, and Joe McBride provide, which helps keep Sycamore Island a delightful refuge for us all.

**New Business:** Archivist Karen Possner mentioned that she would like to have two large (16" × 21") and quite aged land patents scanned. She received two proposals which will be discussed at the July meeting, where hopefully there will be a quorum to consider approval.

The next meeting will be held on the Island at 8:00 p.m. on July 13th. The friends left the Island and made their way back up the hill.

Respectfully submitted  
ANN MARIE CUNNINGHAM  
Co-Recording Secretary

### Large Parties Scheduled



July 23, 3 p.m. on, Marianne Ross, 20 guests  
July 27, 6 p.m.–dusk, Maya Lodish, 10 guests

## Notes from the Island

**Sunday, June 5, 2016**

**Water Level at Little Falls: 5.1 Water Temperature: 73**

The ferry is closed.

Sorry folks, but we had to close the ferry today. Maybe it's not that big a consequence since severe weather is predicted later today anyway.

**Tuesday, June 7, 2016**

**Water Level at Little Falls: 5.3 Water Temperature: 73**

The ferry is closed again.

The gauge at Little Falls is malfunctioning but my visual reading here at the Island is 5.3 (I have the two perfectly calibrated). Too high for the ferry to fly, sorry folks.

**Tuesday, June 8, 2016**

**Water Level at Little Falls: 4.8 Water Temperature: 73**

The ferry is open.

The water is brown and the wind is blowing like mad, but we're open for business.

I saw the strangest sight yesterday—a baby goose swimming with its two parents. Seeing a baby goose is not that unusual, if it's the middle of April, but to see one in mid-June is something of a fluke. I just don't get it.

Some exciting news: the prothonotary warblers have decided to use Gerry's bird house for their nesting cavity. It's great to see these beautiful birds coming and going so near.

**Sunday, June 19, 2016**

**Water Level at Little Falls: 3.7 Water Temperature: 80**

Happy Father's Day!

The Island has been super busy lately. One comment was "I've never seen this many people on the Island when it wasn't a workfest!" I guess it's a bit of a perfect storm, with schools getting out, the weather being perfect, and with all of the pent-up demand caused by the extremely wet and dreary April and May. It's great to see all of the new and old members coming together and pitching in to make the Island such a festive place. We're bracing for another big crowd today, Father's Day being historically a very busy day.

The wildlife is in overdrive as well and I can't look out my window without seeing some kind of feathered creature or another. The geese are constantly casing out

the mulberry tree on the Island, and the fish and turtles are always waiting beneath the mulberry tree that hangs over the river. We spotted the great egret for the first time this year and the osprey can be seen perched on high dead branches around the Island, at least until a king bird comes along and tries to shoo them away.

And of course the snakes seem to be everywhere. I watched patiently the other day as a black snake made its way off the Island. I came upon it as I was heading up the boardwalk and the snake was making its way down the boardwalk. It casually passed me by and settled itself in the mud at the edge of the river with its mouth in the water. It sat there for several minutes and I thought that it might be taking a drink. (Do snakes drink?) Then it slowly started to move into the river, it's front half swimming and its back half crawling. The two different actions seem to require the snake to move in two entirely different ways at the same time. Once it was out in the current it seemed to know instinctively how to face upstream so as not to be washed down-river. I watched as it easily made its way across the river to the ferry landing steps and onto the mainland. I can't say why the snake decided to leave the Island, but maybe it's a sign that there just aren't any good mice to eat over here. Snakes are infinitely fascinating.

**Tuesday, June 21, 2016**

**Water Level at Little Falls: 3.4 Water Temperature: 80**

The busy, post-school year Island is still in full swing. 25 round-trip ferry rides, on a Tuesday!! I guess the magic of Sycamore Island is finally catching on, or trending, as they say.

Our resident gray squirrels have lost their bashfulness and can now be seen stealing mulberries and birdseed, in the middle of the day!

**Tuesday, June 22, 2016**

**Water Level at Little Falls: 4.0 Water Temperature: 80**

The weather is perfect but the river is so brown and muddy I don't think I'll be doing any swimming today. And with the river level at four feet there will be quite a current to contend with. Be careful out there, kids.

**Tuesday, June 24, 2016**

**Water Level at Little Falls: 3.7 Water Temperature: 80**

The river is milky brown with lots of slimy bubbles floating by. Not too inviting to swim in.

The river is also going up and down a lot. Right now

it's at 3.7 which is well above the 86-year median of 3.3 feet for this month of the year. It's predicted to hover around four feet for the weekend ahead.

Pepco sent two guys out here last week to inspect our utility poles. They said that everything looked A-OK. The cool thing was that they were able to date the one wooden pole that we still have down here. That pole was made in 1942! That means that it's been down here on the Island for at least 70 years, and it's still not rotted! In 2003 Pepco was here to replace our other wooden pole with a fiberglass one. That wooden pole was cedar, and it was probably made in the late 1920s or early 1930s!

I added some signage to the Island, nothing too obtrusive. Actually, the sign I put up by my front door is quite attractive and aesthetically pleasing. It's a metal sign, painted red, with gold lettering. It reads, "Caretaker's Quarters." My other purchase was a bumper sticker-type thing that reads, [www.sycamoreisland.org](http://www.sycamoreisland.org). I stuck it to our placard that hangs by the mainland ferry landing. It looks much better than the homemade sign that I put up there years ago.

**Tuesday, June 29, 2016**

**Water Level at Little Falls: 3.8 Water Temperature: 82**

These daily thunderstorms are keeping the river pretty brown but I did hear one swimmer say that the water temperature was perfect. Sadly this turbidity isn't helping the bass fishing, and I have no fish stories to tell so far this year.

I'm slowly getting caught up on the mowing. It's funny, some of the maple saplings that I was cutting were already six inches tall! It just goes to show that if we didn't keep the "grass" cut, the trees would take over and the Island would turn into a dense forest.

Jimmy, from Ace Fire, was here and now our fire extinguishers have been certified for another year.

I went out to look for arrowheads after a hard rain recently and I found a dime over by the outdoor shower. This wasn't just any dime either. It was a mercury dime, made of 90% silver and minted in Philadelphia in 1904! It's in pretty good shape for a dime that's 112 years old. It might be worth a whopping \$5! Its possible that old John Ruppert himself dropped it here! Maybe he had a hole in his pocket.

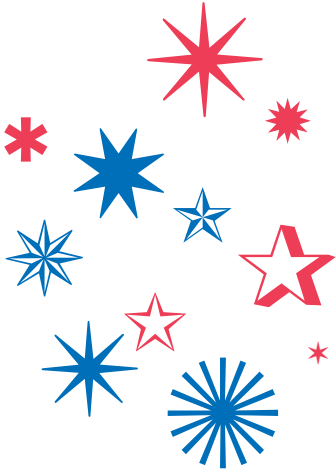
JOE HAGE  
Caretaker

# The Sycamore Islander

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ADDRESS SERVICES REQUESTED

## FIRST CLASS MAIL



To volunteer as a substitute caretaker, please email your choice of day and shift to Madeleine Carter, [madeleinepcarter@gmail.com](mailto:madeleinepcarter@gmail.com).

Saturday Relief Caretakers <b>July/August 2016</b>					
JULY	9 A.M.–3 P.M.	3 P.M.–DUSK	AUGUST	10 A.M.–3 P.M.	3 P.M.–DUSK
JULY 2	Meredith Griggs	Chris Maggio and Liza Karlin	AUGUST 6	Please Volunteer	Norman and Nancy Metzger
JULY 9	Topaz Terry (Clark)	Story Jones	AUGUST 13	Please Volunteer	Mark Wales
JULY 16	Andy Malmgren	Mike Savage	AUGUST 20	Meredith Griggs	Stephen Scholz
JULY 23	David Lyles	Avi Garbow	AUGUST 27	John Beck	Luca Anderlini
JULY 30	Topaz Terry (Clark)	Chris Maggio and Liza Karlin			

*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 August issue is July 29.