

The Sycamore Islander

November 2017 | Volume 96 Number 11



Photo by Mark Friedrichs

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Dates to Remember

November 6: Old Timers Potluck Lunch

November 8: Next Club Meeting, 8 pm (at Clubhouse - potluck dinner before, for those interested)

November 12: Fall Workfest, 9 am to 4 pm (rain date: November 19)

November 26: Islander Deadline (send contributions to markdfriedrichs@gmail.com)

December 13: Club Meeting

Relief Caretakers' Schedule

Contact Madeleine Carter at madeleinecarter@gmail.com to volunteer

November 4

10 am – 2 pm: Filled
2 pm – dark: Filled

November 11

10 am – 2 pm: Filled
2 pm – dark: Filled

November 18

10 am – 2 pm: Filled
2 pm – dark: Filled

November 25

10 am – 3 pm: Filled
3 pm – dark: Filled

December 2

11:00 to dark: Filled

December 9

11:00 to dark: **Need a Volunteer**

December 16

11:00 to dark: Filled

December 23

11:00 to dark: **Need a Volunteer**

December 30

11:00 to dark: **Need a Volunteer**

Thank you to the October Relief Caretakers!! Jason Waite, David Holdridge, Meredith Griggs, Amanda Boone, Sarah Fraidin, Jody & Bobby Benjamin, Ellen Kennedy, Gus Anderson, Meg Beuchert Jones, John Noble, Page Dekker, Sue & Greg Super, Jennifer Urquhart, Alison Levine, John Cunningham, Michael Bergsman, Christy and Garth Ross, Gary Slayen

Old Timers/Good Timers Potluck Lunch

Monday, November 6, 12 noon

Come and share a beautiful fall day with your fellow Islanders. The grill will be sizzling, and we'll be pouring the lemonade. Bring a salad, casserole or dessert to share. You need not be an Old Timer to enjoy the Old Timers/Good Timers potluck lunch. All are welcome.

There is always entertainment. And guess what? It is YOU. In past years, we told stories and sang river songs. This time round, bring one funny joke.

Questions: Contact Lucky Marmon, 301-654-7893, lucretiamarmon@gmail.com



Photo by Mark Friedrichs

Come to the Sycamore Island Fall Workfest!

Sunday, November 12, 9 am – 4 pm
[Rain date November 19]

Bring tools, gloves and something yummy to share.

We'll supply the burgers, chicken and hotdogs.

See you then!

Nominating Committee Recommendations for 2018 Club Officers and Supervisors

The Nominating Committee, comprising John Noble and Madeleine Carter, submit the following recommendations for Officers and Supervisors for 2018. This slate will be presented for a vote at the December 13, 2017 Meeting.

Officers

President: Richard Bertaut
Vice President: John Noble

Co-Recording Secretaries: Lucretia Marmon
Meredith Griggs
Treasurer: Ned Goddard
Financial Secretary: Sherry Fizdale
Membership Secretary: Anne Waidmann
Islander Editor: Mark Friedrichs
Archivist: Karen Possner
Captain: Stan Fowler
Deputy Captain: *Recruiting*

Supervisors

Finance: Ann Marie Cunningham
Law: Rebecca Beynon
Clubhouse: Jody and Bobby Benjamin
Grounds: Alice Bullard
Painting/Carpentry: Karl Kosok
Website: Tryon Wells
Entertainment: George & Shelley Malusky
Camping/Parties: Molly Newberry
Canoeing: Joe Cecil
Swimming: Larry Heilman
Relief Caretaker Scheduling: Madeleine Carter

CARETAKER'S LOG



Photos by Mark Friedrichs and Alice Bullard

Sunday -- October 1, 2017

Water Level at Little Falls: 2.6 Water Temperature: 70

Well you know that we're having fun down here when you grab the ferry rope and you get sticky marshmallows and chocolate on your hands. It may be getting too cold for swimming but it's perfect weather for eating s'mores. I guess there's no avoiding it, Fall is here. The leaves are falling and the recent cold fronts have brought us the Fall migration of warblers. I saw a black

and white warbler on Thursday and a hooded warbler on Friday. We also have a screeching red-shouldered hawk on the Island. Those squirrels better watch out.

The river is the lowest it's been for over a year. It seems miraculous that we went a whole year without the river rising above 10 feet. The highest level was around 8 feet back in May. We've been lucky but you can bet that our time will come. Let's just hope that it's not too bad when it happens.

Tuesday -- October 10, 2017

Water Level at Little Falls: 2.76 Water Temperature: 74

Wow, it's been like July in October lately with this hot and humid weather. Thankfully the river is still nice and clear and cool and, just like last year, it looks like we will be swimming into late October.

We had a little rain yesterday, just enough to cancel the Old-timer's Picnic. The Picnic has been rescheduled for Monday November 6.

We had 1000 visitors here on Sunday. Not people of course, but grackles. They flew across the channel fifty at a time until the tops of all of the trees were alive with the fluttering and cackling of birds. They did a full sweep of the Island moving through the treetops and then, in less than an hour, they were gone. Seeing them brought back some fond memories of my first Autumn on Sycamore Island.

The swimming isn't quite over but I may decide to reel in the swim float from out in the middle of the river. It is so much easier to manage that chore while the river is low and clear.

Our bird feeders are less busy now. It seems that all of the gold finches have departed and the woodpeckers are less abundant as well. I did see a late warbler passing through yesterday. Could not ID.

Wednesday -- October 11, 2017

Water Level at Little Falls: 2.8 Water Temperature: 74

I received a call from former caretaker, Ken Fassler, yesterday. He lives in West Virginia now and was calling to inquire as to why he wasn't getting the Islander in the mail any longer. I explained to him that the Club no longer mails printed copies of the Islander and that we could send it to him via email. I was a little surprised when he told me that he could not receive it electronically because he refuses to use the internet in any way. I'm not sure how he is able to do that in this day and age but I found it admirable. Maybe we can find a way to print and send the Islanders to him, like a Christmas present.

It was great to catch up with him and we talked caretaker stuff for half an hour on the phone. I'm sure there are still some Club members that remember him from when he was the caretaker, back in the 1980's. He had so many great stories, like during the flood of '85 when the river was so high that he had his houseboat moored to the steps of the Clubhouse.

Ken did a lot of improvements on the Island while he was here, including the walkway from the ferry to the Clubhouse. Before he built that boardwalk, it was just a muddy path with some oyster shells thrown in for good measure. Everyone has always admired that boardwalk and the artistic way that Ken cut and laid the planks. What most of us did not realize, me included, was that the genius of this walkway lies under the planks, out of sight.

It may seem hard to believe, but buried under those planks are several heavy metal car-tire rims and metal piping (the metal pipes were salvaged from the bridge over the canal when it was rebuilt in the 80's). Ken then fastened the wooden supports to these weights to keep it in place. It never occurred to me before, but no wonder that board walk never floated away during all these years of flooding. And apparently even the club captain at the time, John Matthews, who at first did not approve of the idea, was able to pat Ken on the back for a job well done.

Wednesday -- October 25, 2017

Water Level at Little Falls: 2.9 Water Temperature: 65

I got back from my mini vacation on Saturday. Thanks to everyone that helped cover the ferry while I was gone. It didn't look like there was a whole lot of traffic down here during my absence and everything was in good shape. I did find a chair in the river but I was able to walk out on a fallen tree and retrieve it with a kayak paddle. I also found a dead squirrel in the middle of the path leading to the bottom of the Island. Poor squirrel, I wonder how it died. The beaver were busy while I was gone and one of the box elders at the bottom of the Island was severely damaged. That darn beaver was able to pull down the chicken wire that was around it and chomped right on through.

It's a great time of year to be on the Island or canoeing on the river. The leaves are really starting to change now and it is so beautiful to see them reflected on the river.

I'm spending my time getting prepared for the upcoming workfest on November 12. Let's hope the weather holds out until then.

Notes for the October 11, 2017 Informal Meeting of the Sycamore Island Club

Although there was no quorum, the following members attended an informal gathering: Jim Drew, Alison Levine, Richard Bertaut, Gerry Barton, John Noble, Ned Goddard, Meredith Griggs, and Tryon Wells. Caretaker Joe Hage also participated.

Minutes from the September meeting will be approved at the next meeting when a quorum exists.

Caretaker's Report: Joe reported that he

- Has strung cable across the canal so another light can be hung;
- Has taken the swim slide down and pulled the swim float close to shore;
- Has determined that the gas-powered chainsaw is not working; Ned Goddard offered to get it repaired before the Fall Workfest;
- Had talked to Ken Fasser, former caretaker, who explained how boardwalk was originally built to keep it from floating away during high water (tire rims and piping underlying the structure);
- Will be on vacation beginning October 16 for one week.

Captain's Report: In the absence of Captain Stan, President Richard Bertaut summarized recent work the Captain done: He is working to stabilize the bank on the ferry landing side where the pole for the ferry cable is. To counter the water erosion, he is using wire-covered bundles of brush. He is also working on replacing stanchions on the ferry and is buying 2x6 lumber to help pull the docks out during the fall workfest. In addition, he will be tackling the repair or replacement of the screen doors on the upper level of the clubhouse.

Vice President's contribution: Fall Workfest will be November 12, with November 19 as rain date. John Noble asked for suggestions for work assignments, pointing out that sometimes members don't know what tasks need to be done. Joe Hage recommended that some might want to cut vines from pedestrian bridge across the river. He also encouraged members to volunteer outside the workfest to, for example, stain and paint the picnic tables or take on discrete tasks that cannot be done in the single workfest day.

John also announced that: (i) Marianne Ross has resigned as clubhouse supervisor and therefore he seeks nominees for this position, and (ii) the fall party has been cancelled because one of the organizers was no longer able to participate.

Treasurer's Report: Ned Goddard explained that the club is currently on budget and that if no major expenses arise in the fourth quarter, it should end the year with a healthier reserve than last year. The club has retired its debt this year and no longer pays interest to bondholders, thus saving \$2000 in interest. Members will continue to pay \$75 per year through 2019 assessed as the construction fee for the renovations, to reimburse our reserves for the principle amount.

Ned also seeks input on budget needs for 2018 from club officers. Will there be more social activities, for example? Will paddleboards or kayaks be purchased? He explained that budget funding has already been allocated for buying new, wicker furniture for the clubhouse.

He mentioned that he is trying to secure Montgomery County approval of our waste fee as a club (Sycamore Island produces virtually no waste compared to a typical club) in order to lower our property tax bill. Our previous successful approval has expired.

Ned further reminded the group that the club has a marine insurance policy covering watercraft.

Other business:

Jim Drew suggested the involvement of the canoe supervisor if paddleboards are purchased. This might include an article in the Islander requesting donated boards, instructions on their use, and safety guidelines.

Gerry Barton thanked Karen Possner for donating two new whistling tea kettles for the kitchen and offered to show a video of a trip on the Yough. River at the next club meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Meredith Griggs

Passing of Jane Winer, long time club member



Excerpt from Washington Post:

“Jane Davidson Winer, born June 6, 1939 in Washington, DC, died at home on October 11, 2017, after a rapid decline in health from an infected heart valve. Her husband, daughter, and kitties were by her side.....She loved the outdoors and spent many hours birdwatching and hiking. She was an active member of the Sycamore Island Canoe Club, and, until recently, rode with the Friday Riders bicycling group. Jane also had a passion for the literary and visual arts. She wrote and discussed poetry, read widely in literature and philosophy, and always had a book to pass along to a friend. She sculpted in clay and bronze, painted, and dabbled in knitting and quilting. Everyone fondly remembers her extraordinary cooking, especially her homemade pasta and signature chocolate chip cookies. Her friends will miss her gift for conversation, her caring, and her generous company.”

Her love of the outdoors influenced many a Sycamore Island club member, where she was active until her last days, organizing club parties and other annual events small and large. She was active well beyond the Island club, as a writer, poet, sculptor, painter, and textile artist.

Jane is survived by her husband, David, long time editor of the Islander and active Club member, as well as her daughter and granddaughters. Jane’s passing is a significant loss for the Club community. She will, indeed, be missed.

A memorial service in Jane's honor will be held at the Church of the Redeemer in Glen Echo, MD on Saturday, November 18 at 1:00 p.m.

Richard Bertaut, President



Islander Editor: Mark Friedrichs; suggestions or contributions of content or photos welcome to mark.d.friedrichs@gmail.com