

The Sycamore Islander

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Photo by Joe Hage

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March 10: Open House for Prospective Members (1-3 pm)

March 14: Monthly Club Meeting, 8 pm on the Island (with John Noble's house as back-up)

April 8: Spring Wildflower Walk

April 11 (second Wednesdays): Club Meeting on the island

April 15 Spring WorkFest and River Cleanup – with April 29 rain date (Tax Day is Tuesday, April 17)

Relief Caretakers' Schedule and New Online Sign-Up System

The Club's new, online method for scheduling Relief Caretakers (Saturdays throughout the year) uses the "Sign-Up Genius" app. Access the app from the [SycamoreIsland.org scheduling webpage](http://SycamoreIsland.org/scheduling_webpage) (or by clicking the Relief Caretaker Schedule and Instructions icon on the Club's home page). Click on the link to the app. There are simple instructions for signing up to be a Relief Caretaker (through June 2018, at the moment). The app will also send you reminders. [You can also sign-up by contacting the Relief Caretaker Coordinator, Madeleine Carter, at madeleinecpcarter@gmail.com] The app provides a calendar that indicates ALL of the Relief Caretakers that have signed up. Relief Caretakers signed up for the coming month are:

March 3

10 am to 2 pm: Eric Aaserud
2 to 7:30 pm or dusk: Anya Schoolman

March 10

10 am to 2 pm: Mike Petrilli
2 to 7:30 pm or dusk: Ellen Kennedy

March 17

10 am to 2 pm: Peter and Mary Ellen Levine
2 to 7:30 pm or dusk: Sara Deshler

March 24

10 am to 2 pm: Howard Weiss
2 to 7:30 pm or dusk: Story Jones

March 31

10 am to 2 pm: Miriam and Alan Pemberton
2 to 7:30 pm or dusk: Jim Landfield

- **Still Need Volunteers for a few Saturdays in April and most in May**
- **Thank you February Relief Caretakers!! Meredith Griggs, Star Mitchell, Sally Kern, Anne Waidmann**

[Second Open House to Meet Prospective Members!](#)

On March 10, the Sycamore Island Club will be hosting the second of two Open House events to allow prospective members to meet current Club members, during the three-month period when we are receiving applications for the Waiting List. Each applicant must have a sponsor who is a current Club member sign their application. We have heard from a number of people who are interested in joining the Club but who do not know current members, and want to give these folks a chance to visit the Island and meet members who may sponsor their application.

Please consider coming to the Island for this Open House. We need current members to be available to show interested people around the Island, answer questions, and to sign their applications. Please invite people who may be interested in applying for membership to come to the Island during these Open Houses. If you will be able to come, please RSVP to Anne Waidmann at annewaidmann@gmail.com

[Join us for the Spring Wildflower Walk](#)



White (and blue) Bluebells



Trillium

Photos by David Winer



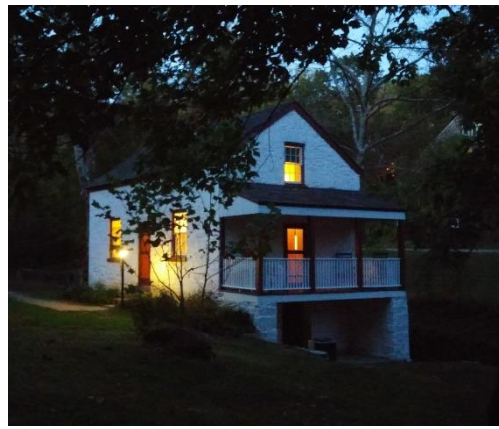
Golden Alexander

Spring is coming! John Parrish and RG Steinman will once again lead the annual Sycamore Island Spring Wildflower Walk on Sunday, April 8, from 10:00 to 2:00- RAIN or SHINE! Bring a lunch or snack, water, and dress for the weather. We will be exploring the area in the vicinity of Cabin John Island near lock 7. We will meet at Lock 7 at 9:50 and depart at 10:00. The nearest parking lot is along the southbound lane of Clara Barton Pkwy. The access from the parking lot to the towpath is at Lock 7. If this parking lot is filled up, drive up to the next lot - about 1/2 mile further. One of us will be there to meet up with you, and we will walk north on the towpath, about 1/2 mile, to Lock 7 to meet up with the rest of the group. The winter snows (?) will finally have given way to the Spring Wildflowers, and we hope to encounter such delights as Spring Beauty, Toothworts, Dutchman's Breeches, Trout Lily, Bloodroot, Golden Ragwort and maybe even Golden Alexanders and TwinLeaf.

[Renting C&O Canal Lockhouses](#) (reprinted courtesy of the C&O Canal Trust)

Have you stayed in one of the Canal Quarters lockhouses? Over 17,000 people from 47 states and three countries have spent a restful night (or three!) in one of the six historic lockhouses lining the C&O Canal.

Our guests marvel at the quaint settings of these small retreats, each of which is decorated with period furnishing to tell the story of a unique time in the canal's history. Visitors are able to enjoy the Park long after the last hiker has left for the day, immersed in a tranquil natural setting, close to home, but far from the hustle and bustle of the day-to-day grind.



“Walking through the front door transports you back in time 60 years.” said guests John and Matt in a hand-written message in a lockhouse guest book. “Remove all of the technology trappings, and you are left with peace and solitude that is rarely experienced this close to the nation’s capital.”

A partnership between the C&O Canal Trust and the C&O Canal National Historical Park, the Canal Quarters program was conceived as a way to creatively reuse the historic lockhouses, so they wouldn’t fall victim to the elements, mischief makers, or neglect. The idea of preserving the structures and opening them for overnight stays solved multiple problems facing the Park. Not only was it a way to rehabilitate the lockhouses, it also created a distinctive opportunity to provide immersive interpretation about the Canal to visitors.

Stays run from \$110-\$160 a night, depending on the lockhouse, and each sleeps eight people. Weekends book up fast, so be sure to reserve your stay soon, or buy a gift certificate as a perfect holiday gift! Visit the website at www.canaltrust.org/quarters for more detail.

CARETAKER'S LOG



Photos by Joe Hage

Monday -- February 5, 2018

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.7 Water Temperature: 34

Like I mentioned before, we have been sorting out all of the canoes on the canoe rack. One of the canoes that was abandoned is an old wood and canvas canoe built by Old Town Canoe Co. I am interested in refurbishing this old boat so I did some research. I contacted the Wooden Canoe Heritage Association and they were extremely helpful in finding out the origin of this canoe. They actually have a data base that includes most of the build records from the Old Town Canoe Company's original records! Because I was able to provide the serial number, WCHA was able to give me the original build record.

It is a 16 foot long, CS (Common Sense or middle) grade, guide model with a keel. It was built between January and March, 1956. The original exterior paint color was turquoise blue. It was shipped on May 24th, 1956 to Falls Church, Virginia.

It was shipped to Wesley D. Gray of 7719 Dockser Terrace, Lake Barcroft Estates, Falls Church Va.

Then, at some point, the canoe was then brought to the Island by former members Richard and Virginia Dianich. I wonder if they bought the canoe from the original owner. Maybe they met on Sycamore Island?

Sunday -- February 11, 2018

Water Level at Little Falls: 5.0 Water Temperature: 39

The ferry is closed. The river is rising and they say it will crest at about 6.5 feet. It might be all week before we're back in business again.

Monday -- February 12, 2018

Water Level at Little Falls: 5.2 Water Temperature: 40

It looks like they have changed the predictions for the river and the water will crest at 5.7 on tomorrow. I'm glad that we won't have any flooding but sadly, the ferry will be closed on Valentines Day, so no Cupid on the Island this year.

Mary and I went to explore High Island just below the dam last week. On the way there we stopped at the other island down there which doesn't seem to have a name. It's the island on the other side of the feeder canal where the kayak gates are. Since it doesn't have a name, I wonder if it used to be part of High Island. Anyway, the cool thing was that as soon as we started walking across the island we startled up a flock of turkeys! They went hustling off when they saw us but we counted twelve big birds as they crossed over the river channel toward High Island. We followed them over there but by then we could see them gathering on the Virginia Shore, just below all of those big mansions. It was cool exploring High Island, it used to be a canoe club, and the view from up there rivals the views from the cliffs near Harpers Ferry.

We also spotted an eagle perched near the nest but so far it does not seem like a lot of activity is going on around the nest. I'm a little concerned since last year they had already laid their eggs by now. Other fine bird sightings, besides the common and hooded mergansers that we see everyday now, are the ring-necked ducks and duffle heads. Hopefully we will be able to spot the turkeys and eagles during the Winter Bird Walk on the 25th.

Saturday -- February 17, 2018

Water Level at Little Falls: 5.1 Water Temperature: 40

I had to tell the relief caretaker to stay home today, the river is on its way up again and is expected to get over 6 feet later this week.

Luckily we did not have this problem last week when there was an open house for future members. I never heard how it went or how many showed up for the event but there were several chairs gathered around the banquet/ping pong table. Hopefully it was a success. I know it overlapped with the Canoe Cruisers event and hopefully that went well. Thanks for cleaning up so nicely.

Wednesday -- February 21, 2018

Water Level at Little Falls: 5.1 Water Temperature: 44

The river is still a little bit high but we should be able to open the ferry tomorrow.

Had a great time yesterday canoeing on the Monocacy river in Frederick. I highly recommend this trip. We had never paddled upstream of town before and it was surprisingly picturesque and wild, despite being close to such a large urban area.

Thursday -- February 22, 2018

Water Level at Little Falls: 4.9 Water Temperature: 44

The ferry is open and running again.

I saw a red fox run across the Island yesterday evening. I had a feeling that there was a fox here and two weeks ago someone else spotted it, but I'm still surprised that this fox has remained on the Island for so long. Maybe it came over when the river was frozen and is now reluctant to swim away. I guess she's finding enough voles and mice to keep herself fed. I hope she didn't catch any of my squirrels.

Monday -- February 26, 2018

Water Level at Little Falls: 5.4 Water Temperature: 48

The ferry is closed again.

Not that many people would show up on a day like today but it looks like we'll be closed most of the week.

I haven't heard yet how the annual winter bird walk went. Hopefully they were able to see some interesting waterfowl. I'm curious if they saw any eagles since I haven't seen them near the nest yet.

[As reported and photographed by David Winer: Nine sleepy birders showed up at the ferry in a constant drizzle. Leader Paul Hagen decided to abort the bagel/coffee start in the clubhouse because the river was slightly over five feet. We had biscotti on the towpath instead.



It was a bleak day with rain, mist, and mud underfoot. We enjoyed the event in spite of the conditions, spotting several species of ducks and a typical winter flock of songbirds. No sign of the resident Bald Eagles.]

Wednesday -- February 28, 2018

Water Level at Little Falls: 5.8 Water Temperature: 48

The ferry is closed. The river crested at 6.2 feet and is slowly on its way down. The gauge in Paw Paw WV. crested on Monday at 14.7 so it's going to be a while before the river is below five feet again.

Our own Gerry Barton was featured in the Kent magazine last month. Kent is the neighborhood within Palisades where Gerry has been living since he built his house there back in the sixties. Congratulations Gerry, we miss you down here. I hope you can get us a copy of the article.

With all of these donated boats laying around here, I found that I needed some more rack space to accommodate them all. I decided to add on to the kayak rack that I built a few years ago. I didn't need to buy a bunch of lumber to do it either, I just used the lumber that was laying around here from the old canoe dock. The hardest part was dismantling the old dock but I'm happy with what I built and it's nice to get those kayaks and canoes off of the ground and out of the mud.



Photo by Joe Hage

[Minutes for the February 14, 2018 Meeting of the Sycamore Island Club](#)

Meeting was held at home of John and Susanna Membrino

Attendees: Sherry Fizdale, Stan Fowler, Luca Anderlini, Marianne Ross, Tryon Wells, Gerry Barton, John Membrino, Suzanne Membrino, Anne Weidmann, John Noble, Bill Marmon, Mark Friedrichs, Jim Drew.

Vice President John Noble called the meeting to order at 8:06 p.m.

Financial Secretary Report: Sherry Fizdale reported dues payments by Members and Waitlisters totaled \$77,468 as of Feb. 14, one day before the new Feb. 15 deadline. Payments were received from 84 percent of those to whom invoices had been sent with 47 invoices still unpaid. Two senior members have resigned. Sherry has attempted to contact non-payers to ascertain status before dropping the non-paying Members and Waitlisters from membership. There was discussion about awarding honorary membership to resigning members who have given meritorious service to the Club. The issue will be further discussed at next meeting.

Membership Secretary Report: Ann Waidmann reported a successful "open house" for prospective members on February 10 on the Island. Seven families including a number of children braved heavy rain for an orientation visit and tour by Ann and Richard Bertaut and David Winer. A second "open house" is scheduled for March 10. Ann reported that 51 membership applications have been received as of Feb. 14 for the 19 places currently available on the Wait List which is limited to 60. It is expected that openings on the Wait List may grow by 10 by the time of the April lottery due to resignations and moves to Senior Member status.

Applications to date are equally divided between those under 40 years of age and those 40 and older.

Captain's Report: Stan Fowler reported that he had designed a new arrangement for the canoe dock reusing existing materials to provide a slip to make easier the loading and exiting from canoes. Stan had a mock-up of his design made of legos. Stan also reported work on ordering new doors for the Clubhouse.

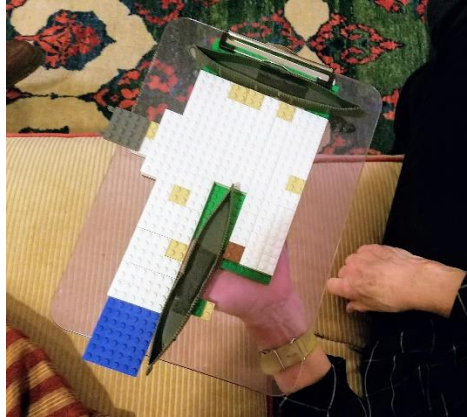


Photo by Mark Friedrichs

Islander Editor's Report: Mark Friedrichs gave a six-month report. He is looking for short items of interest to members. Possibility of member profiles and a photo contest were raised in discussion.

New Business: John Noble reported that Treasurer Ned Goddard has moved to Denver Colorado for a new job, but will continue his work for the Island remotely until a successor is found.

Date for the Spring Work Fest is April 15 with April 29 set as rain date.

March 14 Club Meeting will be held on the Island, weather permitting with John Noble's house as reserve location.

Membrino's were thanked for their gracious hospitality.

Minutes of the January meeting were approved by acclamation.

Meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Bill Marmon, subbing for Co-Recording Secretary Lucky Marmon, recovering from back surgery.



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