

# The Sycamore Islander

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Photos by Joe Hage

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**September 3: Labor Day Regatta**

**September 12: Monthly Club Meeting**, 8 pm on the Island

**September 23 (11-3 pm):** Large Party (Vicki Judson); rain date: September 29

**October 10:** Monthly Meeting (second Wednesday), 8 pm

## Relief Caretakers' Schedule and Online Sign-Up System

To sign-up to be a Relief Caretaker (any Saturday), you can access the "Sign-Up Genius" 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. [You can also sign-up by contacting the Relief Caretaker Coordinator, Madeleine Carter, at [madeleinecpcarter@gmail.com](mailto:madeleinecpcarter@gmail.com)]. The app provides a calendar that indicates ALL of the Relief Caretakers that have signed up (through August, but September will be added soon) and provides reminders. Relief Caretakers signed up for the coming month are:

### September 1

9 am to 2 pm: Angela Hirsch  
2 to 7:30 pm: Jenelle Dennis

### September 8

9 am to 2 pm: Kevin Haley  
2 to 7:30 pm: Jeffrey Komarow

### September 15

9 am to 2 pm: Silvia Strikis  
2 to 7:30 pm: Stephanie George

### September 22

9 am to 2 pm: Joe McBride  
2 to 7:30 pm: David Holdridge

### September 29

9 am to 2 pm: Meredith Griggs  
2 to 7:30 pm: Elizabeth Taylor

**Still Need volunteers for October**

**Thank You to all those who served as relief caretakers during August: John Butler, Stephen Kern, Hayley Holdridge, Chris Maggio, Tory Ruttenberg, Joe Belden**

## Flash News: Winners of three Labor Day Regatta events



Best in Show-Off Exhibition



Bailey Han and Taylor Han are first to finish in the Three-legged Race



Mathew and Mike Mc Cormick are first to finish in the Round the Island Canoe Race

More news from the Regatta in next month's *Islander*!

### Proposed Change to By-law Provision Specifying Second Wednesdays for Monthly Meetings

The proposed change is to be voted on at the September 12, 2018, Monthly Meeting (since there was no quorum at the August meeting).

Current by-law:

*23. Regular Meetings: Regular meetings of the members shall be held on the second Wednesday of each month, the December meeting being combined with the Annual Meeting.*

Discussion:

For three monthly meetings (May, June and July, 2018) we have discussed a proposed by-laws change to make the meeting day (currently the second Wednesday) more accessible to members and thus increase member participation. In the July meeting, the change was decisively defeated. Nonetheless, there was a sense of the meeting that the objectives were good and that Island leadership should have the by-laws flexibility to schedule alternative meeting dates. Thus, the following change is proposed.

Proposed Change:

Add the following sentence to the current by-law 23:

*The President at his discretion and with advance notice in the Islander and a blast e-mail to all members may schedule an alternate day for a specific monthly meeting.*

## Reassessing Passes to the Island

The Club's officers and supervisors have recognized that guest pass procedures need reassessing.

The practice of giving Island passes to non-members for good deeds began well before the Club's current lottery system for full membership and wait-lister status. The current lottery system has solved the labor-shortage problem that engendered the pass reward system.

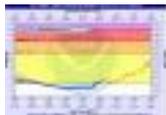
The standing rules of the Club currently allow a pass holder and up to 9 family members or friends to a day on Sycamore Island in gratitude for service rendered. The recommendation is to change the standing rules about passes and to end the practice of giving wait-listers who serve as substitute caretakers a reward pass. Being a Saturday substitute allows the wait-lister (and immediate family) to use the Island on that Saturday.

Also under discussion are rules limiting who has authority to dispense passes, how many people a pass-holder can bring along, and what services warrant a pass. Anyone who would like to weigh in on this discussion should attend the September 12 monthly meeting.

## Sycamore Island "Flood Watch" Icon and Graph Added to Web Site

by John Noble

A valuable addition to our web site is the "Flood Watch" icon and graph. In one easy click you will see the recent, current and forecast Potomac River levels at Little Falls Dam. Updates are provided several times a day. This data enables us to quickly determine whether the River is at 5 feet or lower and the ferry is open. The icon, reproduced below, is the second one down on the left hand side of the home page, [www.sycamoreisland.org](http://www.sycamoreisland.org). Our thanks to Webmaster Tryon Wells for making this practical addition to our website.



Flood Watch

# A Short Trip Down the Vltava River in the Czech Republic

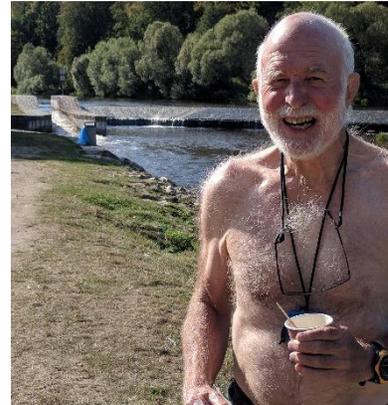
by Bill and Lucky Marmon



On August 27, we took a ten-mile run down the Vltava river. We are pictured here just as we were about to begin our canoe in the town of Cesky Krumlov, south of Prague, near the Austrian and German borders.

It was a magically beautiful trip through magnificent forests and light rapids.

There were also two spillway slides. Spillway two at the end, near the takeout, had a gigantic wave at the bottom that crashed over our bow and we capsized. We were swimming in the Vltava. Fortunately, the dry barrel stayed dry, protecting phones, passports and valuables. Lucky held onto the canoe. We were able to



save our glasses. I even retrieved my new North Face hat from the turbulence. A little embarrassed and soggy, we were safe and happy about the adventure.

## CARETAKER'S LOG

**Wednesday -- August 1, 2018**

Water Level at Little Falls: 5.2  
Water Temperature: 75

The ferry is closed today, more rain means more high water.

**Friday -- August 3, 2018**

Water Level at Little Falls: 6.4  
Water Temperature: 75

The ferry will be closed until further notice.



**Tuesday -- August 7, 2018**

Water Level at Little Falls: 5.6    Water Temperature: 75

The ferry is still closed but will most likely open again tomorrow morning.

This is pretty funny, comical actually. The river floods and I have to scurry around moving everything away from the river's edge. Then the river recedes and I quickly try to get things back to normal. Then, the river flood two days later and I'm scurrying around again like an idiot. This rainy summer, maybe I should just leave all of the tables tied down and all of the floatables on high ground. Sheesh!

This life without the ferry is getting old. Sometimes it's nice to come and go in the canoe every day and it's not a bad thing to find yourself canoeing first thing on a Monday morning. It's also nice to be able to cut the grass on the back 40 and not have to worry about listening for the bell, the grass actually got cut! But it can be limiting. Although I would like to, I can't contemplate having guests. I can't get my bike to the mainland and it's a hassle moving trash or groceries or a guitar. The threat of rain everyday makes it so I can't just tie the canoe to the railing. I have to pull it up the steps and onto the landing so I can flip it over so it doesn't fill with rain water.

One of the biggest disappointments about all of the rain and high water this summer is that we didn't get to set up "Fish Camp". It was such a nice oasis last year to have the screen tent down there and we were hoping for more improvements this year but sadly the river has been too high. On another sad note, the willow tree that I planted at the bottom of the Island last year was taken by the beaver. I had it well protected with wire but the high water pushed it over and there was just enough trunk exposed for the beaver to snag it, bummer.

#### **Thursday -- August 16, 2018**

Water Level at Little Falls: 4.4    Water Temperature: 79

The river water is still a little cloudy but it's a nice cool temperature, especially for August.

We managed to get those huge trees untangled from the swim dock, hooray! Thankfully Geoff and Hayley showed up in time to help me cut the ropes and push the debris away. Hayley was even standing on top of the giant logs trying to undo the cluster of debris. Once the logs were free, I had to race down to the Captain's dock to make sure that they didn't get restuck down there. I used the long bamboo pole to keep those monsters flowing down stream, just like back in the old lumber-jack days. If anyone wants to see the logs that were stuck you can visit one of them that is stuck on something down near the warning buoys.

I finished painting Stan's new Stanchions and I put up my slack line like I did last year, the kids seem to like it.

I guess I may see some of you at the meeting tomorrow night. Right now, it looks like we can have the meeting on the Island.

#### **Wednesday -- August 22, 2018**

Water Level at Little Falls: 5.3    Water Temperature: 79

The ferry is closed because of high water.

#### **Friday -- August 24, 2018**

Water Level at Little Falls: 5.1    Water Temperature: 79

The ferry is closed today but my crystal ball tells me that the ferry will definitely be open and back to normal service tomorrow, Saturday. Just in time for the weekend!

#### **Friday -- August 30, 2018**

Water Level at Little Falls: 4.7    Water Temperature: 79

The first thing I want to say is that the Club owes Mary Kearney, my sweetie and assistant caretaker, a huge debt of gratitude. She was able to fix the problems with the Club website and made it possible for me to post updates on my log. For nearly three weeks I wasn't able to post anything or provide river updates, but Mary stepped up and voluntarily cured the problem that had left everyone else scratching their heads. Thanks Mary! You are a true asset to this Club!

I also wanted to share a funny flood story. So back on May 20th we had a flood and there was a lot of trash and debris cast unto the Island. One of the items that drifted up was a fence post. Now we get a ton of driftwood lumber here every year including 2X4's, posts and dock parts, but his post was different. It had an address on it. We decided that it would be fun to try to find out where this post had come from and how far it has traveled to get to Sycamore Island.



We had a similar incident when the Calleva dock washed ashore here. It was just cool knowing that it came from the Calleva camp up near Seneca Creek, about twenty miles away, and had survived a trip over Great Falls to get here.

So how do you find out where a random addressed fence post came from? Well, we knew that some of the worst rain fell near Frederick and that there was a wash out on the towpath near Point of Rocks and Catoctin Creek. We decided to look for matching street numbers in that area and to my amazement, Mary found an address that seemed to match. It was on Ausherman Road in Knoxville Md. and it was right up against

Catoctin Creek.

So, I carried the post up the hill and put it in my van and one Saturday last month, Mary and I drove out to Ausherman Road. It was a tiny road and the creek was close on our right as we made the turn. The first driveway we saw was our destination and I quickly turned and climbed the hill away from the creek. Right away we could tell that there had been some serious flooding and flood damage. There was a new address post on the hillside where I guess the old one had been. The new post was surrounded by newly laid, fist-sized gravel that was spread out, all the way up the side of the driveway, to fill in where the soil had all eroded away. We reached the top of the drive and saw the owner standing near a chicken coup. He didn't seem surprised at all to see us drive onto his property and he barely reacted when I jumped out of my van and introduced myself. He politely listened as we told him the story, but he didn't seem to be the slightest bit interested in the Club or where it was, or that his post landed there. We left him the post and he graciously let us take a picture and we left. It's all kind of silly but I think that it's cool to know that that post traveled on the river for over 45 miles to get to Sycamore Island.

We are finally getting a few days in a row when the ferry is open so I'm finally seeing some of my long absent Club members that have been kept out by the flooding. We're actually getting pretty swamped with ferry pulling. I've also been busy cutting the grass, clearing the trails. I had to make some emergency repairs to the ramp to the canoe dock and to the captain's float. I also spent a long day loading my van with all of the flood debris and busted kayaks, and hauled it all off to the dump.



## Notes for August 8, 2018 Meeting of the Sycamore Island Club

Meeting called to order by Richard Bertaut, President. Present were Jim Drew, Sherry Fizdale, Ned Goddard, Gerry Barton, Karen B. Possner, Richard Bertaut, David Winer, Sally Strain and Vicki Judson. Meeting was one short of a quorum and proceeded as an information discussion only. Karen Possner brought delicious homemade cookies.

1. The large party hosted by Vickie Judson scheduled for this past July was rained out. The nine members present unanimously approved, subject to the September meeting, Vickie's proposed new date of September 23, with a rain date of September 29.
2. Discussion of the ongoing problem we have sending out blast or mass emails to the membership. A difficult technical problem. Richard Bertaut and Tryon Well have been and will continue to work on this. Also, our Website now has a "flood watch" icon (on the left side) which gives a quick reading and projection of the river at Little Falls.
3. Following up on the discussion and vote held at the July meeting, about giving the President authority under the by-laws to call for a monthly club meeting to be held other than on a 2nd Wednesday of a month, the general conclusion was that since the vote last month was overwhelmingly negative to changing the day, and since the President currently has the power to call a special meeting for any date and time, the need for a by-laws change was not great.
4. Club member Sally Strain reported that on a recent island visit she encountered several young guests using a paddle board without wearing life jackets as club rules require. They did not receive her information that club rules required a life jacket in the spirit it was given. They did not comply with her request to put on life jackets. We discussed what a member should do in these or similar circumstances. The sense was that members should definitely call attention to club rules when violations occur, but individual members or caretaker Joe are not expected to immediately enforce club rules if the behavior isn't changed upon request. We concluded that a member whose request does not secure proper behavior should report the conduct and the name of the member hosting these guests to the club president for appropriate action.
5. David Winer has a new slide for the swimming dock. He needs help in getting it from his garage to the Island. Ned Goddard and others volunteered to help. Joe Hage reported the logs snagged by the swim float can be removed when the river goes down.
6. Treasurer Ned Goddard is working with member Florian Kogelnik, who will assume the treasurer's role at the end of the year. Ned reports that this is going very well. Ned said until the end of the year, requests for funds, etc., still need to go through him.

The meeting concluded at 9:15 p.m.

Submitted by Jim Drew, Acting Secretary



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