

The Sycamore Islander

December 2018 | Volume 97 Number 12



Canoe in snow photo by Joe Hage; 1977 photo of Ron King on ferry is compliments of the Martin Luther King Library

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December 2, 9 am to 4 pm: Fall Work-Fest

December 12, 7:15 pm: Annual Meeting and Holiday Party at Vicky Judson and Michael Esch's home, 6203 Dahlonge Road; brief meeting to include election of club officers, followed by a potluck holiday dinner!!

January 12: The January meeting will be at the home of Purcie and Patrick Bennett-Nickerson, 5108 River Hill Rd, Bethesda, MD

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. There are simple instructions. [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 (through February, but March - April will be added soon) and provides reminders. Relief Caretakers signed up for the coming month are:

December 1

11 am to 5:30 pm: Meredith Griggs

December 8

11 am to 5:30 pm: Anne Waidmann

December 15

11 am to 5:30 pm: Iris Miller

December 22

11 am to 5:30 pm: Sara Deshler

December 29

11 am to 5:30 pm: **Volunteer Needed**

Thank You to those who volunteered, but – alas – did not serve as relief caretakers during November!

[Come to the Sycamore Island Fall Work-Fest!](#)

Sunday, December 2, 9 am – 4 pm

Bring tools, gloves and something yummy to share.

We'll supply the burgers, chicken and hotdogs.

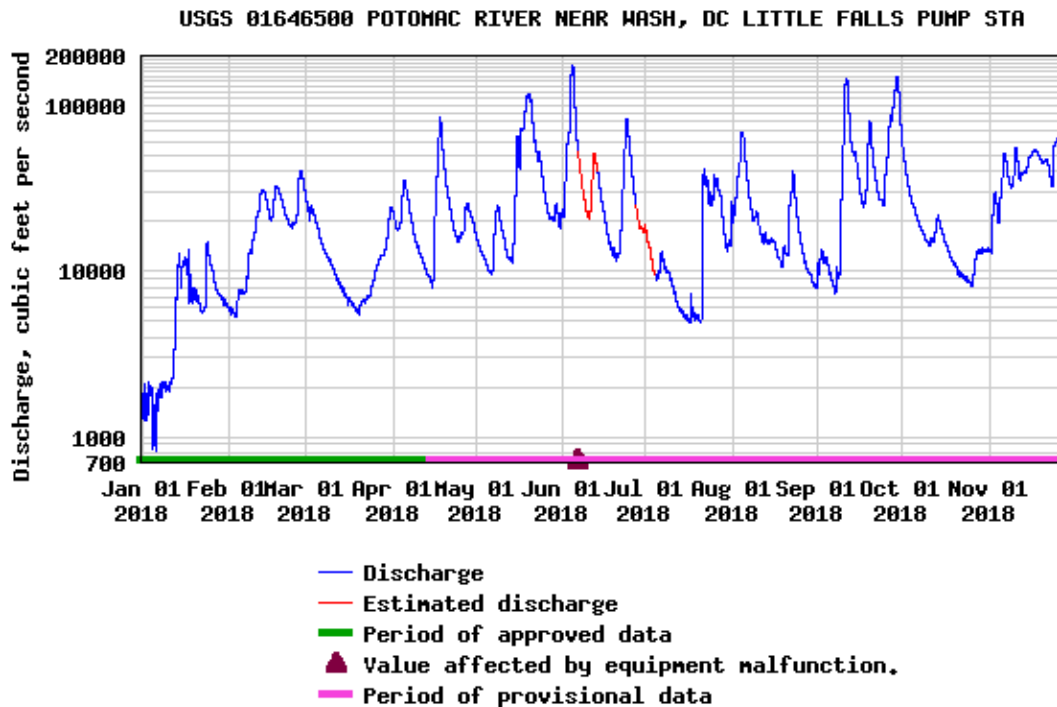
See you then!

CARETAKER'S LOG

Saturday -- November 3, 2018

Water Level at Little Falls: 5.3 Water Temperature: 53

The ferry is closed today because of high water.



The graph depicts the unusual frequency of high water days this year. Most days with discharge volumes over 10,000 cubic feet per second at the Little Falls measuring station resulted in river levels over 5 feet, so the Island was forced to close.

Monday -- November 5, 2018

Water Level at Little Falls: 4.8 Water Temperature: 55

Update, as of 1:30 today the ferry is closed. The river is 5.1 feet now and rising to over six feet later on. That was a lot of rain last night and it looks like Sycamore Island will not be the place to go on your election-day holiday. Sorry.

The ferry has re-opened, at least for the time being. The river is predicted to go up again tomorrow.

Saturday -- November 10, 2018

Water Level at Little Falls: 5.9 Water Temperature: 55

The ferry is closed and oh yeah, the work-fest has been postponed. Sorry that there was not an email notification but the work-fest is not happening tomorrow. Please plan to be down here on next Sunday, the 18th on November. Thanks!

Thursday -- November 15, 2018

Water Level at Little Falls: 6.3 Water Temperature: 55

It's snowing! I sure wish that we had the workfest last Sunday, then we could have gotten all the leaves before the got wet.

Sadly, the workfest will have to be postponed again since the river will be swollen for a few more days. No workfest this Sunday.

The plan now is to have the work day on the Island on December 2, since many volunteers will be away on the Sunday after Thanksgiving. That happens to be the first day on Hanukkah, so I hope that doesn't interfere with turnout. Workfest in December, oh brother.

Monday -- November 26, 2018

Water Level at Little Falls: 7.4 Water Temperature: 45

I hope that everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving weekend. It's sad that no one was able to visit the Island yesterday, Sunday, it was such a nice and sunny day, for a change. I didn't expect that arctic blast that we got on Thanksgiving night. It got down into the 20s that night and, even though it was not part of my holiday plan, I had to paddle over to the Island to make sure that the pipes didn't freeze and burst.

Yes, lately, for the last three weeks in fact, I've been coming and going in a canoe. It's not unusual, these days, to see me by my van at the top of the hill, changing into my river boots and putting on my life jacket before I trudge down the hill.

It doesn't look like we are going to have any kind of meaningful workfest this fall. We hope to have everyone here on Sunday December 2nd, but that's a big maybe at this point. We are also looking for someone to run the grill that day since I don't think that George can make it. The good news is that some of the heavy work of bringing in the docks has been done. Since the river was high this morning, I had a solo workfest and I was able to haul the docks all the way on shore with the help of the rising river. So now, two of the four docks are in. The canoe dock is going to take some work and we will have to wait until the river goes down before we can free it from the driftwood and bring it ashore. The swim float also needs to come in.

I've been working on the leaves as well and I've been using our new leaf blower to keep the gutters clean and the decks and roofs cleared off.

I'm almost done hanging the new screen doors. They look awesome! What an improvement.



Photos by Joe Hage

It has been pretty lonely and quiet down here and not much wildlife to keep me company either. I don't have any birds at the bird feeder since I had to quit putting out the bird seed. The seeds attracted a rat that got washed up here during a flood, so we had to put a stop to that. There was a large doe here one afternoon, and there is evidence of a beaver coming here at night. (the beaver cut down the small willow tree that was just downstream of the ferry) Most of the cormorants have departed and so far not many wintering birds. Strangely, our local geese have not been on the Island lately either.

Wednesday -- November 28, 2018

Water Level at Little Falls: 6.3 Water Temperature: 45

There is no rain expected between now and Sunday, so we hope that the river will go down enough by Sunday so that we can have our work day. I think we are going to have it even if the river is a little above the cut-off of five feet. Sometimes you have to make exceptions.

We have been working on bailing out the Club canoes and kayaks and many boats got put away by various members that pitched in and volunteered back in October. There are still over a dozen or so canoes that need bailing so hopefully we can tackle that job on Sunday. I tried Richard's idea of siphoning the water out of the canoes with a piece of garden hose, like the way we used to siphon gas out of our dad's car back in the seventies. It worked pretty well but it's kind of slow compared to the other method of dipping a five-gallon bucket into it and bailing it out gallons at a time. Plus, when you siphon, you can't help but get some of that nasty water in your mouth.

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

Meeting was held at home of Tryon Wells in Bethesda, who provided cookies and drinks around a round table. Yummy brownies were brought by Karen Possner.

Attending—John Noble, Tryon Wells, Karen Possner, Richard Bertaut, Star Mitchell, Bill Marmon, Rick Membrino, Ned Goddard, Jim Drew, Mark Friedrichs, and caretaker Joe Hage.

President Bertaut called the meeting to order and announced the presence of a quorum. Minutes of the October meeting were approved by unanimous voice vote.

Treasurer's report—By Ned Goddard, in from Denver. The 2018 financial results and proposed 2019 budget were presented. Ned indicated the Club is in good financial shape in part because of two refunds from FEMA for flood insurance.

Proposed budget for 2019 is \$95,300, a slight increase over the 2018 budget of \$94,000. No increase in dues was recommended, and Ned recommended the \$75 construction fee be eliminated in view that the loan for the caretaker's quarters upgrade has been fully paid off and the reserve has been restored.

There was discussion of a 15 year anniversary bonus for Joe Hage. (Joe left the room.) This would be in addition to the bonus every four months when bonus criteria are met. The special bonus was approved and the amount will be announced at the December meeting.

[Upon his return to the room, Joe shared a particularly appropriate card he and Mary had received on the occasion of their recent marriage]



The Act of Love transcends thought,
transcends Words. It is a daring Plunge
into the dancing Waters of Life. E.W.Scott

Ned's proposed Budget and dues for 2019 were adopted by unanimous voice vote.

Ned said that Florian Kogelnik, who was earlier voted in as Treasurer, officially took over effective November 1 with check writing authority. Ned said he would be available from Denver to assist the changeover in this key Club position.

President Bertaut and Vice President John Noble reported that a new and safer wood burning stove would be purchased and installed at an estimated cost of from \$4,000 to \$5,000, depending on final selected features and specifications. Research and estimates are under the leadership of Eric Aaseruc, a waitlister who brought the stove problem to the Club's attention.

Captain's report – given by Caretaker Joe Hage in absence of Stan Fowler. Painting of doors in clubhouse has been completed. The Island is still recovering from big storms in September and October, causing high water and many ferry closure days. A large number

of member and Club canoes are scattered around the grounds, filled with water and in need of bailing. At least one Club canoe has been badly damaged. Members are expected to bail their own canoes. Joe said that in the future, after a big storm, it would be prudent to organize an ad hoc work party to attend to damage and to bail canoes.

Because of continuing high water, the Fall Work-Fest has been moved to Dec. 2.

Nominating committee report — by committee chair John Noble. Proposed officers and supervisors were published in November Islander and in this Islander, with positions of Deputy Captain and Entertainment and Swimming Supervisors still unfilled. Jim Drew will be nominated as Clubhouse Supervisor.

Club will vote on 2019 Officers and Supervisors at the December meeting.

Membership Secretary's report—given by John Noble in the absence of Anne Waidmann. Club currently has 160 regular members, 78 Senior members, 17 honorary members, 20 inactive members and 60 waitlisters.

New Business—Sign In Sheet -- There was discussion about the importance of getting all members and guests to sign in on the ferry boat, in order to be able to accurately measure Island usage, and to formally release the Island from liability for injury or harm. Bill Marmon proposed that a sign be posted on the ferry, indicating that Members and Guests enter at their own risk. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote. Marmon was asked to consult our Legal Supervisor Rebecca Beynon for wording of the sign.

Honorary Membership for Ned Goddard—Richard Bertaut and John Noble proposed Honorary Membership for retiring Treasurer Ned Goddard, who has moved to Denver, CO. The motion cited Ned's singular and distinguished service to the club as Treasurer for five years, and his earlier yeoman's work on the renovation of the Caretaker's quarters. There were further kudos accorded, and the motion passed with an enthusiastic and unanimous voice vote. Meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Submitted by Bill Marmon, acting for co-recording secretary Lucky Marmon

Nominating Committee Recommendations for Sycamore Island Officers and Supervisors for 2019 (As of November 28, 2018)

The Nominating Committee of John Noble, Madeleine Carter and Anne Waidmann submit the following recommendations for Officers and Supervisors for 2019. This slate will be presented for a vote at the December 12, 2018 Meeting.

Officers

President *	Richard Bertaut
Vice President *	John Noble
Co-Recording Secretaries	Lucky* and Bill Marmon
	Meredith*Griggs
Treasurer	Adrian Kogelnik
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	Jim Drew
Grounds *	Alice Bullard
Painting/Carpentry*	Karl Kosok
Website*	Tryon Wells
Entertainment	Recruiting
Camping/Parties*	Molly Newberry
Canoeing *	Joe Cecil
Swimming	Recruiting
Relief Caretaker Scheduling*	Madeleine Carter

* indicates incumbents

Election of Ned Goddard to Sycamore Island Club Honorary Membership - November 2018 Monthly Meeting

Ned Goddard was elected to Honorary Membership in the Sycamore Island Club for exemplary service. Ned has retired from the Treasurer's position after five years of service. He has relocated to Denver, CO, for his new job and proximity to his favorite sport, skiing.

Another major contribution to the Club was service on the Caretaker's quarters Renovation Committee with Al Brown, Richard Bertaut, Tryon Wells and Ann Marie Cunningham. They declared, about the old quarters, "We are slum landlords." This service spanned a year and he secured the architect Lynn Eaderola with whom he worked on the Montgomery County permitting process

While treasurer he accelerated payments on the construction debt thus saving considerable interest payments. The notes were paid off two years early. In addition he worked with the Personnel Committee to clarify the caretaker's health insurance, bonus assessment procedures, and job description.

He also reduced insurance costs and telecommunications charges and won back from the County overcharges on trash collection fees. Further, he secured O and D insurance through Bridgepoint Insurance.

Ned's final budget reflects his careful work. There are about \$140,000 in Club reserves. (Reported by John Noble)

Montgomery Sycamore Island Club Budget Report for 2018

Excerpt from the Report of the Treasurer

Likely 2018 Budget Outcome

The Operating Budget for 2018 was **\$94,000**, which was a 2% increase from the year before, assessed to account for general Cost of Living increase, possible insurance premium increase liability, and funding declines to reserves from three years of deficit spending. There was no recommendation to increase member dues, as 2018 was a new member "lottery year".

As a reminder, the Club's overall budget goal is to fund three primary expense areas that: maintain our facilities, provide for our Caretaker, and adjust for increases in taxes, health care and casualty insurance coverage to protect the Club's assets and employee. The budget is composed of **Variable Costs**, like facilities repair, capital improvements, entertainment and member social events and programs - items that can be "managed". We also have **Fixed Costs**, such as Caretaker Salary, Payroll taxes, Health, Flood and Business Liability Insurance, plus Utilities. Members should be aware that we have *limited* flexibility to control Taxes, Salary or Insurance, unless we deliberately decide to reduce protection on our assets to reduce expenditures. On the revenue side, Member dues are used to cover the projected annual expenses. This year, expected increases to Insurance, both for our employee, and Business Liability and Flood Insurance, *will make it more difficult* to estimate expenses. It is a certainty that these items will rise well above years past increases.

2018 continued a positive trend for the prior year for the overall budget – our 10 year Construction loan retired in 2017 (two years earlier than budgeted, and the variable costs of maintenance and Capital improvement are currently underspent, with no major cost surprises (major facilities damage, Health care liability, or significant increase in taxes or insurance premiums) from last year. Our Flood Insurance, Casualty and Healthcare Insurance premiums

held steady, and our Caretaker was healthy, and worked very hard to protect the facilities from flood damage. The Club currently enjoys a significant cash cushion, from a “one-time benefit” in 2017 of the return of a large FEMA Premium adjustment and an IRS refund. For the second year in a row, our income will cover expenses, and the Club’s reserves remain healthy, a welcome reprieve from a few deficit years.



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