

The Sycamore Islander

September 2019 | Volume 98 Number 9



Cardinal flower



Button bush



Halberd-leaf rosemallow



Art Class on the Island

Photos by Joe Hage

Newsletter Contents

[A Successful Labor Day Regatta](#)

[1966 Old Town Canoe Available](#)

[Caretaker's Log](#)

[August Meeting Minutes](#)

September 2: Labor Day Regatta, 2-6 pm

September 11: Monthly Club Meeting, 8:00 pm, on the Island

October 9: Club Meeting, 8 pm, on the Island

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 now provides a calendar that indicates the Relief Caretakers that have signed up through October **[ALL slots still open in October]** and provides reminders. Relief Caretakers signed up for the coming month are:

September 7

9 am to 2 pm: David Powell
2 to 8:30 pm: Chris Maggio

September 14

9 am to 2 pm: Birgit Murff
2 to 8:30 pm: Fred Pimkney

September 21

9 am to 2 pm: Roman Kulbashny and Nancy Shute
2 to 8:30 pm: **Volunteer Needed**

September 28

9 am to 2 pm: **Volunteer Needed**
2 to 8:30 pm: Jennifer Hearn

Thank You to the many volunteers that served as Relief Caretakers during August!! Note that there are still two slots open in September.

A Successful Labor Day Regatta



All photos by Mia Holland

There were the usual games for the kids: the spoon and egg rely, water balloon toss and stomp, and the three-legged race. The canoe race around the island was hotly contested in two heats, and Jesse and Jennifer were the the overall winners, coming in at 6 minutes and 52 seconds. This was followed by the canoe ball pick up, almost as competitive as the race. And, of course, the games ended with the traditional donut eating contest.



Thunderstorms were predicted for the afternoon. Happily, they held off until just before the last of the burgers and hot dogs came off the grill. Everyone gathered in the club house to get out of the rain. It was a cozy and happy, if somewhat crowded, scene. The musicians set up around the drum kit and gave an improvised concert. As if on cue, the rain let up just as it got to be time for people to head home and the river was calm and beautiful as everyone rode the ferry back to shore. And another fabulous Labor Day at Sycamore Island came to an end!

[1966 Old Town OTCA Canoe available to any Restorer](#)

Club Member Ben Robinson is offering his 1966 Old Town OTCA canoe to a member or waitlister who may have more time to complete a fairly involved wooden canoe restoration project. The 17-foot long canoe is made of cedar and spruce, with red western cedar planking. Ben has a copy of the original build sheet. There is one cracked rib, which really ought to be replaced. The canvas and much of the original varnish has been removed. The canoe currently resides in Winter Park, Florida, and it has no interest in being converted into a bookshelf or an outfitter's display case. If you are interested, contact Ben directly.



CARETAKER'S LOG

Friday -- August 16, 2019

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.2 Water Temperature: 84

I mentioned that I cleaned the screen porch ceiling and it still looks great, but I'm worried that it won't last. I was admiring my work yesterday when I realized that the ceiling in there was dripping wet! I can't imagine why that ceiling is constantly wet. I opened the doors and windows and set up a fan to circulate some air, but why? It reminds me of a humid green house, so maybe it's condensation from a hot upstairs and a cool downstairs. Maybe the moisture comes from the ground and gets trapped. Whatever the case, I think we need to figure out a solution or be stuck with constant mildew. Maybe there is a scientific mind out there that can solve our little dilemma. Maybe we just need to install a couple of exhaust fans.

Monday -- August 19, 2019

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.1 Water Temperature: 86

I'll be finishing up the carpentry job that I started. I took on the large project of replacing the rotted siding on the southwest corner of the clubhouse. I suppose I should have known, but the rot did not stop at the siding and

once I removed the siding, I found that all of the plywood behind the siding was wet and rotted too. I also found that there was no vapor barrier tar paper behind there either, so not surprising that it failed.

By the time all of the wet wood was removed, I had to install a full sheet, 4'X8', of 3/4 inch plywood. Of course I added a ton of insulation in the wall before I sealed it off. Normally we don't need to insulate the unheated clubhouse but since this was the wall for the winter bathroom, I decided that we better insulate. I covered the plywood with tar paper. Then I installed the new wood siding, but not before I primed the back of each piece. And I took the time to prime every single newly cut edge. (very important) I think that one of the reasons that the old siding didn't last was because it wasn't properly primed.

After all of the siding was in place I used epoxy putty to hide the new seams. After sanding the patches, I primed and painted everything, two coats.

I installed eighty feet of new siding but I had to go out and buy 48 feet more. I discovered that the two bottom pieces of siding were also rotted. This was a separate area and I believe that it was compromised during the floods of '96 when the river saturated the lower parts of the Clubhouse.

After making the Clubhouse look so nice and new, I wanted to make sure that the root of the problem was addressed. I think that the trouble started when the gutter on that side of the house was modified. Someone thought that it was a good idea to install a downspout there. Before, the rain would just shoot off of the gutter and fall like a shower below, and the gutter never became clogged. With the new downspout, I was constantly battling the leaves and sticks that would clog the gutter and cause the water to overflow onto the vulnerable bare-wood siding. So what did I do? I switched the gutter back to what it was and I got rid of the downspout. I took down the downspout and the gutter, cut off the hole and then carefully riveted and caulked a ten-foot extension to the gutter. Then I had to reinstall the massive gutter.

I also installed new siding on the north side of the Clubhouse where the wood rotted because it wasn't installed properly along the roof line. I also replaced two pieces of rotted window trim.

This is probably way too much detail for most people but since the Club trusted me to do this job and has agreed to pay me for the extra work, I wanted you to know that it is being done in the most thorough and professional manner for a long-lasting repair.

Friday -- August 30, 2019

Water Level at Little Falls: 3.0 Water Temperature: 79

Big news. Two new paddle boards magically appeared here last Saturday. They aren't exactly new, one is missing a keel, but new to us and they seem to be high quality, OXBOW brand, sups. I don't know who to thank but thanks! One member has already volunteered to get a new keel for the one. Now all we need is someone to volunteer to buy two new paddle board paddles.

The zip line is still out of commission. Club member, Dr. Dan, came down to help get it back up and removed the old, rusty cable. We have more of that same cable here already, but since it rusted out so quickly we were

hesitant to use the same galvanized cable that we used last time. I think that Dave Winer is looking into the cost of a stainless steel replacement cable.

The bass fishing is terrible. I floated all the way from Angler's Inn to Brookmont and didn't get one bite! Catfishing, on the other hand, is excellent. Fishing aside, it's well worth a trip to the Island, just to see the late summer wildflowers.

The Maryland Fire Equipment Corporation came to do their annual inspection of our six fire extinguishers. The interesting part of that story is that due to liability issues within the corporation, my technician wasn't allowed to come to the Island so I had to carry all of the fire extinguishers up the hill to have them checked in the parking lot. Then I had to bring them all back down again. Safety first, I guess.

I put up the screen tent a few weeks ago. I thought it would be nice to have a shady, bug-free zone inside the tent but I don't think anyone used it, so I took it down. I had to remove the slide from the dock earlier this month as well. I'm not sure what happened while I was away, but I had to remove it and rebuild it after it got damaged and became unsafe.

The water is low again so maybe I'll try to cut some more of the log blocking the ferry before the big regatta tomorrow.



[Minutes from July 10, 2019, Meeting of the Sycamore Island Club](#)

In the absence of President Bertaut, Vice President John Noble called the meeting to order at 8:00 pm.

Attending were Madeleine Carter, Phoebe Hamill, Gerry Barton, Star Mitchell, Bill Marmon, John Butler, Sally Strain, Vicki Judson, Joe Hage, Sherry Fizdale, Andrew George, Jim Drew, and Meredith Griggs

The July minutes were approved, and the following reports were made:

Communications: Phoebe Hamill has written describing and photographing trail problems and suggesting the club help in improving the eroded trail down to the island. John will write the National Park Service. With NPS approval, we expect that Captain Stan Fowler will lead this effort. Vicki Judson will also discuss a possible trail improvement project with the Boy Scouts.

Labor Day Regatta: Under Mia Holland's leadership, the regatta events have been outlined on the club website. Madeleine Carter will also use Sign-Up Genius to send an announcement about the events.

Treasurer's Report: The only expense recently has been for testing the club's well water; two samples were taken by Easter Day Well Co., which concluded that the water is safe for human consumption.

Caretaker's Report: In the absence of Captain Stan Fowler, Joe Hage summarized recent improvements he's made: Siding on clubhouse has been painted and rotted wood replaced at bottom of back steps. An old gutter has been replaced, with a hole also patched to forestall rotting. One kayak has a hole in it that will need repairing.

He and others also commended work done to create the new corn hole game, which Joe had originally suggested. Rodolfo Castro constructed it; Dave Winer helped paint it; and Renee and John Butler carried it down to the island.



Joe and others also brought up three recent issues:

- The swimming dock, ramp, and raft were left covered with mud (i.e, mud carried onto dock and thickly spread), and the slide was broken—all while Joe was on vacation in August. This raises safety issues, as well as needless work.
- Dirty dishes left in kitchen sink.
- Canoes not being cleaned of mud after use.

Madeleine Carter offered to draft an email reminding members of expected behavior: supervising children, cleaning up after activities.

Website Development: Financial Secretary Sherry Fizdale explained that longtime web master Tyron Wells wishes to relinquish his role and is working with her to ensure that the club's membership data are put into a transferable format. He will continue to manage the site until the new one, under an account with Club Express, is in place. The club's financial files will be moved to that site, and members will be able to pay their dues with a credit card. Sign-Up Genius may also be subsumed into the new site.

Sherry would welcome help testing the new system, which will cost about \$90 a month along with a \$900 onetime charge to set up (unless a club member would like to take on the setup). She hopes to have the new system running by January 2020.

Islander newsletter: John Noble thanked editor Mark Friedrichs for his excellent work on producing the newsletter and reminded members that contributions are welcome.

Membership Secretary's Report: In lieu of secretary Anne Waidmann, John Noble explained her proposal that no lottery be held in February 2020. Only 10 slots will be available on the waitlist owing to recent high retention rates. The proposal is to wait until 2021. Bill Marmon cautioned that the bylaws might need to be changed, and Jim Drew wondered if many more would move to senior membership because of the change in that rule.

Swim Report: Vicki Judson will write a reminder to parents, in the *Islander*, about swim safety. She also suggested working with River Keepers next summer on testing river water. Sherry Fizdale is trained in doing this, but the club might need to fund the effort. Vicki pledged to research what needs to be done.

Relief Caretaking: Madeleine Carter said all was going smoothly.

New business: Bill Marmon pointed out that the zip line is fraying at one end. Joe has consequently disabled it, and Dave Winer is working on a repair.

The meeting was adjourned before 9:00 pm. The next will be September 11 on the island.

Respectfully submitted,

Meredith Griggs, as edited by John Noble



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