



# STAR ISLAND NEWSLETTER

Star Island Corporation • Autumn 2009 • Volume XXXV, Issue 3

*Our mission since 1916 is to hold and administer Star Island and other properties we acquire for religious, educational and kindred purposes.*

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

*Business Model*..... 1, 7  
*From the President*.....2  
*From the Director of Development*.....3  
*The Joy of Caning*.....5  
*From the CEO*.....5  
*Marketing News* .....5  
*Medical Report*.....6  
*Conference Schedule*.....7  
*Passages* .....7  
*Starry Night*.....8

*Edited & produced by Priscilla Hodgkins and Justina Maji with invaluable assistance from all contributors. Thank you!*

## Star Island's New Business Model

The three-year Strategic Plan for Star Island Corporation includes as a goal the creation of a sustainable Business Model. Over the summer and into this fall, the Board has done an extensive examination and analysis of Star Island operations for purposes of furthering this goal. The complete text of the Business Model will soon be available on our web pages; for the purposes of the newsletter, the following is a condensation of the major points.

To achieve a sustainable future for Star Island, in a manner consistent with the mission and values of the Corporation, the Board has identified four "lines of business" that we must pursue. They are listed here in order of importance:

1. Nurture and strengthen the existing core conferences.
2. Develop one or more additional conferences to join the ranks of our "core conferences."
3. Continue to market the island to organizations with kindred purposes. Examples: Granite State College and Dover Yoga.
4. Continue to market to personal retreaters.

Personal retreaters provide a flexible way of selling additional bed-nights, as well as introducing people to the island.

The Business Model also describes how we will have to do things differently in the future in order to achieve the revenue that will give us financial sustainability. Of principle importance is the relationship between the Corporation and conferences and recognition that our interests are the same: to present a full and compelling season of conferences that will attract sufficient conferees to meet our financial needs. The Corporation and conference leadership will need to work more closely on marketing, registration, recruiting, scholarship aid and programming. While marketing has traditionally been the purview of conferences with limited support from the Corporation, significant funds will be deployed to support our marketing efforts for conferences. Work will be required to balance the need to increase revenue while making a week on the island affordable to conferees.

None of the changes will be successful unless all of us engage in this effort with a sense of com-

*(Continued on page 7)*



*Photo courtesy of Sean D. Elliot*

## From The President

Dear Shoaler:

The Greeks apparently had a very different orientation toward past and future than we do. They understood the past to be in front of them and the future to be behind them. After all, we have a broad view of what has gone on before and the future has a way of sneaking up on us from behind.

Pel Reunion, the Labor Day Weekend conference of former Pels on the Island, is always

a time of reminiscing about that broad vista of the past. It got me to thinking about my several years as a Pelican. I was a dishwasher, dishie, today. Peter Mercer and I were given one of the lowliest of jobs. It required neither technical skill, we just turned a few knobs and pushed the racks through, nor interpersonal skill since all we had to do was make nice to the waitresses (the gender is correct for those days). It was pretty cushy. Twice in my two years it was not.

We had a good routine, knew what we had to do and were usually done with the dinner dishes in plenty of time for evening activities. One night just as the dishes were being cleared, the power went out. We had all the dinner dishes for more than 250 conferees and no machine. It was very late that evening when we finished hand washing everything. It happened again, the next year, I think. We had a little warning for the next storm and made a few preparations. We didn't have to learn

that lesson twice. But it wasn't that easy. And the future came up and smacked us from behind again. We gained a very personal understanding of the fragility of the

affected by the downturn and very much needs the generosity of all those who are able to give something to help us minimize a hard year.



1988 "Dishie" Alex Blue

system and the technology we depended upon. And, since the dessert that night was blueberry cobbler, we had the blue hands and arms to remind us.

Life is littered with such lessons from carefully planned picnics to marriages and jobs. We can learn our responsibilities and carry them out to the best of our abilities but (again the Greeks) the fates can still trip us up, as the economy did to Star this year. We knew we were in for a storm that would seriously rock the boat. And we made some preparations: incentive program, 10 & 10 recruiting, beefed up marketing, minimizing expenses including staff furloughs. But it was not enough. We still were unable to fill enough beds to balance the budget.

As we approach the end of the year and you have a better understanding of your own economy, I urge you to consider Star Island for any year end contributions you wish to make. The Annual Fund is also

Neither of those two dishwashers was deterred by their "lessons" as Pels. Pete Mercer went on to become a senior staff member and was twice Island Manager for a year. Yours truly ended up writing this column. We did turn away from technical work like dishwashing and both ended up as ministers, one UCC the other UUA. And we both have made a contribution to the Annual Fund. Without your help, too, the future won't be as promising.

Season's Greetings,

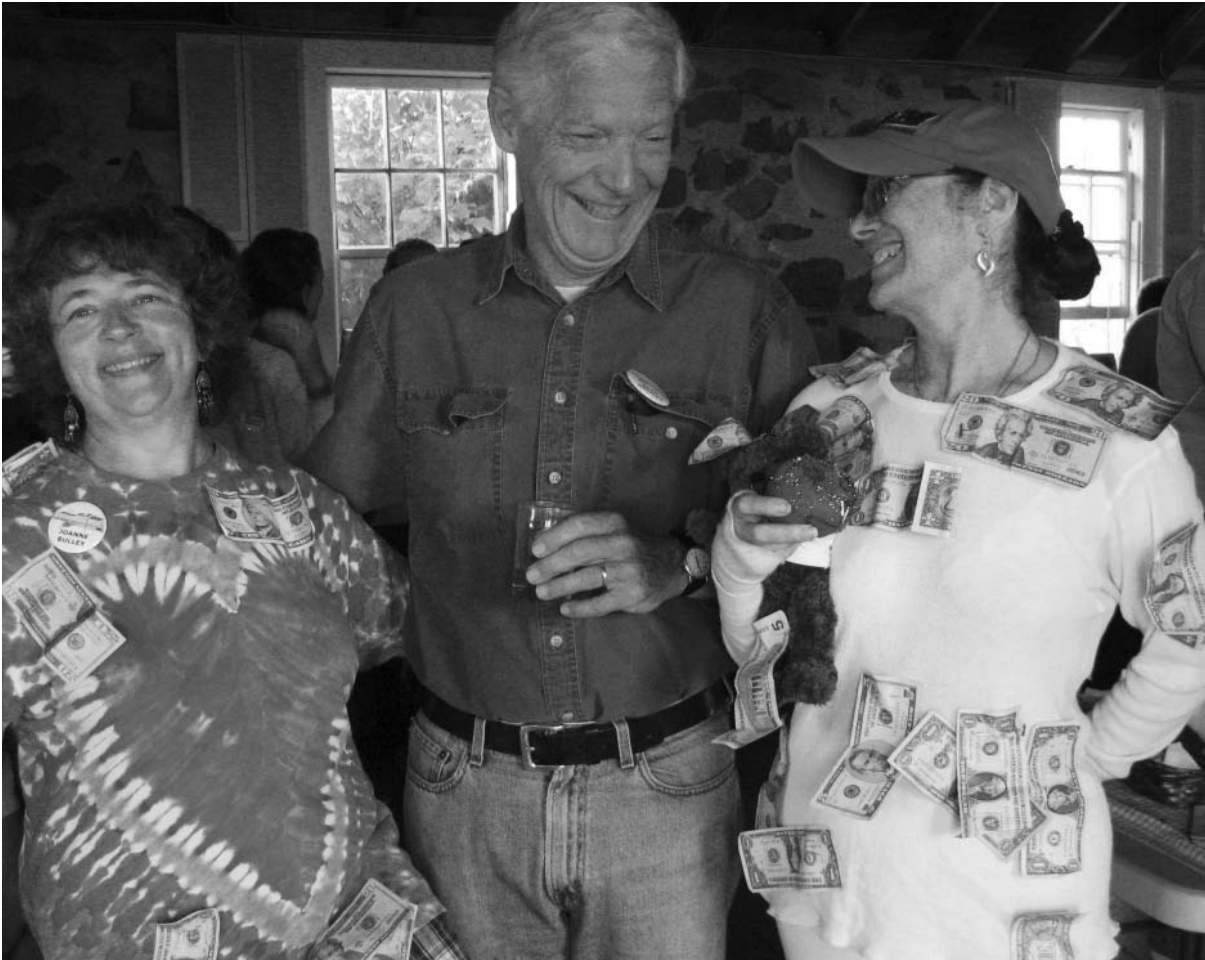
—Brad Greeley  
Star Island Corporation

## Who's that with Fred?

Send your guesses to:  
[phodgkins@starisland.org](mailto:phodgkins@starisland.org)



## From The Director of Development



*The origins of YF and so much more*

Having just read President Greeley's column before starting my own I have decided to begin where he left off. These are challenging times. There is no doubt about that. The time to make a difference is right now. We are approaching year end striving to close the gap on our 2009 goal. If you have not yet contributed – and even if you have and you are moved to give again – now is the time. Your gifts are much appreciated and support all of the goods and services that make the Star experience what it is.

Many thanks to all the 2009 Annual Fund volunteers who helped with conference fundraising this summer. It was good to meet you and wonderful to have your help. Each conference has its own approach with some very unique results.

Chris Mientus achieved 100 percent participation selling stars to Star Gathering 2 as did Rosemarie Smurzynski and her team of volunteers during the International Affairs conference. Pel Reunion greeted Buffy Carson and Joanne Bulley – 70's era Pels – clad in PJs in honor of John Spencer whose own PJs were sucked into the generator and shredded after hanging them too close to the heating source. Rumor has it that "YF" was derived from the letter posted on the generator the next day signed by "your friendly engineers." You can only imagine what the contents of the posting were! Buffy and Joanne are pictured here with President Greeley, offering him the opportunity to pin a gift to their attire. Social hour seems like a perfect location for a visit by the ghosts of generators past.

As many of you know from attending the briefings about the capital campaign, *Shining the Star: A vision for your spirit's home*, the campaign is quietly underway. Board members will be among the first to commit to the project and they in turn will reach out in the coming months to others with the greatest capacity to make a difference. Despite the challenges in this economy, all involved believe that this work must begin now to stabilize the infrastructure and begin to build an endowment for the future.

I attended General Assembly this year and saw so many members of the Star family in attendance. It got me to thinking that with some help from those who do attend GA we could put together a schedule of volunteers to staff a table in the exhibit hall. Kris LoFrumento has a similar interest in staffing an informational table at the annual UCC meeting. If anyone who attends these annual meetings is interested in volunteering to help please email me at [amatthews@starisland.org](mailto:amatthews@starisland.org) and I will begin to put a plan together.

—YFDOD, Angela Matthews

## The Joy of Caning

Year after year, when we return to Star and walk up the path from the dock, there waiting for us like old friends at the top of the stairs, as if to say “You did come back!,” are the rocking chairs. And later,



when we proceed to the dining room and settle into our seats, we hear them creaking under our weight and feel as if we're back home. Have you ever thought about



what Star would be like without those chairs to support us?

Like many other aspects of the island that we have come to love and count on, these chairs require maintenance and attention to keep them in good working order. Their seats, as well as the backs of the rockers, are made of woven cane, which weathers and wears out with use. These seats and backs then need to be replaced with freshly-woven ones. While the rocker seats are now available in pre-woven form that can be snapped in place, their backs still require weaving--or caning--by hand, as do the more intricately patterned seats of the dining room chairs.

This summer at LOAS I, several conferees gathered daily on the front porch to attend a chair-caning workshop led by Letitia Rice. Letitia started re-caning chairs at Star about 10 years ago, and has offered her workshop at previous LOAS I conferences. “I love to cane, and teach this dying art,” she says, words she demonstrated by patiently and tirelessly explaining the craft to workshop participants.

Letitia Rice gives some pointers to Bob

Romero of Kingston, RI. “I like the meditation that comes with doing a handcraft,” Bob says.

Steve Copithorne of Alton, NH canes because it benefits the island. “I’m sure I’ll be using the chairs in the future,” he says. “There’s something relaxing about mindless repetition,” says Vic Henschel of New York, NY. “It’s soothing.”

Whatever the motivation for caning, it’s a wonderful way to contribute to island upkeep and the pleasure of all visitors to Star. If you are interested, check to see if a workshop will be offered at your conference next summer. And next time you’re in the dining room chatting with old friends or out on the porch gazing at the sun sinking into a rose-colored sea, give a thought to the hard-working chair beneath you that makes your experience possible.

—Ella Rutledge



# From the CEO

September

From morning waltzing in the lobby to intensified storms, September is a very special month on Star Island. At this time of the year, the water is actually warmer than the air during the early morning polar bear swims, the mists hang low in the rugosas full of fat rose hips, and the stray Monarch butterfly is still trying to find its way to Mexico. The mosquitoes (along with much of the vegetation) seem to have been knocked down by the first hints of frost at night, and the warm sunny days are matched by the cold, clear nights.

The 15 conferences that come to Star for the end of the season range from a gath-

## Marketing News

The Marketing Team is proud to announce four innovations to our marketing efforts: a new streamlined design for the Blue Book, new pages on our web site for Star Island Stories, an energetic Ambassadors program to increase conference enrollment and a fresh new design of the web site. These improvements are inspired by and in step with the new business model (see article on page one) and reflect our dedication to fiscal responsibility and conservation of natural resources.

In an effort to move towards online registration, and to streamline the Blue Book (which saves Star money, is a green initiative, and makes the process less cumbersome and confusing to new Shoalers), instructions for registering will be condensed and appear on one page. Each conference will be described in brief, with additional details published on the web pages. The Blue Book will be designed to attract new people to conferences as well as offer Shoalers all they need to register for their favorite conference and feel

ering of former Pels to yoga teachers reaching for further training. The return this year of the Star Hampshire Dance conference was a particularly touching occasion. The founder, who passed away last year, was fondly remembered, and the joy and enthusiasm of the dancers spread through the island. On the last Saturday night, one could spot current Pels, senior staff, conferees, guests, all doing the do-si-do with the Star Hampshire participants in a lively exchange in Brookfield.

As I was walking back to my room that night, I was thinking that, despite a horrendous economic lurch, we “did good” this summer. The last weekend saw over 200 conferees and personal retreaters on the island, and the sounds of laughter,

inspired to try a new one.

We know that many come to conferences on Star Island because of their friends or because they heard about it at church, or, to put it all together: they heard about it at church from a friend. We are launching a more aggressive Ambassadors Program to help spread the word about Star Island through the people who know it best, those who are steady Shoalers. This program is part of our plan for Corporation staff to work closely with conference leaders to fill all conferences.

In January we will launch a newly designed web site, which will be especially attractive to visitors who are new to Star Island and give Shoalers a lively portal and a lot more information about Star Island and the conferences.

We are not waiting until January to launch new pages on the Star Island web site for publishing stories sent to us that are too long to include in the newsletter. The initial offering includes engaging articles by Edie and Steve Whitney, C.E.V.

music, chapel singing, and bells filled the air. The buildings look tight, the most recent spate of roof leaks have been fixed, the systems all worked well over the summer, and the shower experiment seems to have been successful.

Now we begin to “close-up” the island, anticipating the return of winter and our diligent caretakers. But for few moments, I stand on the Sprague porch, watching the stars and the breakwater, listening to the music from Brookfield and the waves, and thinking... “This is a good place.”

Peace,

—Vicky Hardy  
Chief Executive Officer

## Who's that with Fred?

Send your guesses to:  
[phodgkins@starisland.org](mailto:phodgkins@starisland.org)



Many thanks to Ron and Donna Titus for their donation of photos of Fred McGill.

Jenkins, Joe Pescatello, Joan Strickland Johnson, and Alec Lowry. You are welcomed to send us your Star Island story, via email to [phodgkins@starisland.org](mailto:phodgkins@starisland.org).

The newsletter will also be available on our web pages. One of our goals for the future is to reduce the number of printed and mailed newsletters and offer a full archive of newsletters on the web site.

—The Marketing Team  
Priscilla Hodgkins  
Justina Maji  
Joe Watts

# Official Medical Report from Star Island's First Aid Station

**Case of the Week: Stephen Alsdorf, New Shoaler**

Submitted by Lisa Nelson, MD

**Subjective:** The patient is a 39 year old man who comes to Star accompanied by his wife and 2 children, Maddie and Hannah, who presents primarily with the desire for a week of uncomplicated vacation. He reports that his wife Nelson (IA week 1972-1986; pelican 1987-1992) promised him a "perfect week of sun and fun with all of our good friends, and free to boot!" He noted a fishy smell accompanied this promise but nonetheless, he found himself agreeing to be co-Doctor of the Week.

His symptoms first began when he arrived on Star Island at 9am Saturday July 18th for a "quick" orientation by the illustrious island Nurse Practitioner, Pat Ford. This orientation lasted 3 hours and included a 10 pound, 4 inch high binder of island emergency protocols, a thorough review of advanced cardiac life support and frequent lapses into a strange New England dialect with words like Rounder, Kitchie, Oceanic, EMB, FAS, The Underworld, Smuttynose, and Shower Day. Lastly, he was presented with a pager-like device called a "Job-Com" and told he was on call for the next 8 days straight, nights

included.

Shortly thereafter the patient began to suffer from nervous sweats, palpitations and anxiety. He also reports some paranoid ideation as he tried to assess which conferees looked most likely to go into sudden cardiac arrest, and could he convince them to leave the island voluntarily before said event roused him from sleep?

## Physical Exam:

Patient is a (handsome) well-appearing male in mild distress. Appears younger than stated age, and only mildly irritated with examiner.

- + Head: very, very large
- + Eyes: green, surrounded by dark circles
- + Throat: slight erythema from yelling at daughter Madeleine to please put her shoes on in the lobby
- + Lungs: clear (non-smoker, naturally)
- + Heart: very big and tender
- + Abdomen: soft, only mildly distended from too many grilled cheese sandwiches
- + Genitals: (deferred due to the G-rated nature of this publication)
- + Musculoskeletal: like Superman, only skinnier

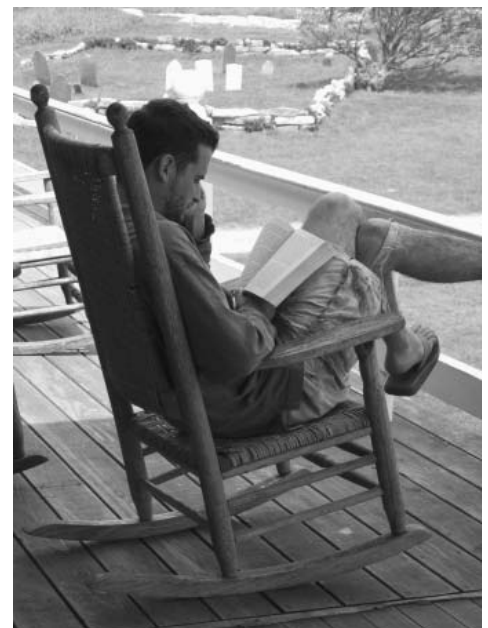
- + Skin: warm, well-perfused and well-bitten by mosquitos
- + Psychiatric: patient maintains good eye contact, well groomed, no delusions, no apparent thought disorders—however he keeps calling Appledore 'DUMBLEdore' and admits to perseverating on how to perform an emergency tracheotomy with only one dose of Tylenol and an empty Bic pen.

## Assessment:

Well-intentioned 39 year old man suffering from New Shoaler Disorientation Syndrome and mild sleep deprivation.

## Plan:

- + Politely explain to wife that since this was all her brilliant idea, she can now carry the damn Job-Com all the time.
- + Play lots of tennis, as soon as it stops raining.
- + Meet lots of lovely new and old Shoalers alike.
- + Become completely enchanted by fabulous sunsets, magical night skies, and quaint Star Island traditions.
- + Get plenty of rest (hint to concerned audience: save true medical emergencies until you hit the mainland, please!)
- + Return year after year until you, too, are a crusty old Shoaler-- kicking back in a rocking chair, watching the beautiful kids, and speaking fluent Star Island-ese.



## Who's that with Fred?

Send your guesses to [phodgkins@starisland.org](mailto:phodgkins@starisland.org)



mon purpose. We come to Star Island with many different perspectives: conferee, youth, Corporation member, Pelican, staff, Permanent Trust board member, Corporation board member, benefactor, neighbor, and others. Many of us wear several of these hats.

With these roles come different reactions to each of the changes described above. We must honor those perspectives and reactions. But we cannot let disagreements about the parts lead us to fail to work together towards the whole. A great deal of hard work, hard thinking and group deliberation went into creating this map for the on-going viability of "the island that is our home," but more will be needed from more of us to succeed in making Star Island sustainable.

Fred McGill often quoted the phrase that Star Island "asks of us a certain height." It asks that height of all of us now. \*

### Who's that with Fred?

Send your guesses to [phodgkins@starisland.org](mailto:phodgkins@starisland.org)



## 2010 Conference Schedule

6/12-6/16	YOUNG ADULTS CONFERENCE (4 NIGHTS)
6/12-6/19	YOUNG ADULTS CONFERENCE (7 NIGHTS)
6/12-6/19	CONFERENCE ON THE ARTS
6/17-6/23	ISHRA JUNE CONFERENCE
6/19-6/26	NATURAL HISTORY CONFERENCE
6/19-6/26	YOUNG RELIGIOUS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS
6/26-7/3	ALL STAR I FAMILY CONFERENCE
7/3-7/10	ALL STAR II FAMILY CONFERENCE
7/10-7/17	LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CONFERENCE
7/10-7/17	MEDITATION WEEK
7/17-7/24	INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS CONFERENCE
7/24-7/31	INSTITUTE ON RELIGION IN AN AGE OF SCIENCE
8/1-8/8	STAR GATHERING I FAMILY CONFERENCE
8/1-8/8	STAR GATHERING I YOUTH CONFERENCE
8/1-8/7	SOUTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE UNIVERSITY
8/7-8/14	STAR DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP
8/8-8/14	STAR GATHERING II FAMILY CONFERENCE
8/8-8/14	STAR GATHERING II YOUTH CONFERENCE
8/14-8/21	LIFE ON A STAR I FAMILY CONFERENCE
8/21-8/28	LIFE ON A STAR II FAMILY CONFERENCE

Final dates for conferences occurring between August 28 and September 19 will be available shortly. Labor Day is September 6, 2010

## Passages

Former Pelicans **Kyla Bollens-Lund** and **Greg Dixon** married on October 10.

Former Pelican **Julia Brenner** married Craig Dilger on June 27.

**Rev. Jim Brewer**, who was often minister of the week at the LOAS Conferences passed away on April 28. He and his wife Barbara were Corporation members and were LOAS conference chairs.

Natural History Conferee, and liaison to the YRUU conference **John Eartha** passed away on October 4. There will be a memorial service for John during NHC.

Former Pelican and IRAS conferee **Dave**

**Falla** married Dionne Wrights on April 17.

On June 7th Stefan and Karin Kuczinski gave birth to daughter **Remi Kuczinski** on June 7. Claire and Ted Kuczinski are extremely proud grandparents.

Former Pelican Rachel Doll O'Mahoney and her husband Sean gave birth to **Junia Isaac Doll O'Mahoney** on August 23.

**Elizabeth Oshel** and **Michael LaTorre**, both former Pelicans, married on August 2.

**Franklin Perkins Jr.**, a LOAS II conferee passed away on May 31.

**Erin Perkins**, former Star Assistant Facilities Manager, Pelican, and Laity

conferee married **Johnny Kadlik**, former Star Buildings Manager, Pelican, and Smuttynose Steward on October 10.

**Peter Reynolds** passed away on June 6. Pete had a fondness for the Isles of Shoals and spent a summer working for Shoals Marine Lab on Appledore Island.

**Philip J. Rutledge** passed away January 26. He had attended the International Affairs Conference with his wife Violet.

Corporation member **Rita Van Tassel** passed away on July 12. She had been a Corporation member since 1983 and attended the All Star I Conference.





**STAR ISLAND CORPORATION**  
MORTON-BENEDICT HOUSE • 30 MIDDLE STREET  
PORTSMOUTH, NH 03801

Phone: (603) 430-6272  
Fax: (603) 430-6270  
www.starisland.org  
Email: office@starisland.org

PRESORTED  
FIRST CLASS  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
MAILFORCE INC



# STARRY NIGHT

A BANKS GALLERY EXHIBITION OF STAR ISLAND  
PAINTINGS AND CORKS & CURDS WINE TASTING

Saturday evening, November 21st 2009  
6:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M.

Last year a group of renown artists spent a day on Star Island working en plein air (creating paintings outdoors to work directly from nature), a technique made famous by Renoir, Monet, and Degas and of special importance to Childe Hassam. These extraordinary paintings will be for sale at Starry Night, a special fundraising event for Star Island on Saturday, November 21 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at

the Discover Portsmouth Center. The evening will also feature hors d'oeuvres from Rudi's Restaurant of Portsmouth, wines from Corks and Curds, and gourmet chocolates from Byrne and Carlson.

We are most grateful to the Portsmouth Historical Society for their invitation to hold this exhibit and reception in the galleries of the former Portsmouth Public Library, which is located next to Star

Island offices at 30 Middle Street. Proceeds to benefit the preservation of Star Island and its historic properties.

Make your reservation by calling the office (603) 430-6272 or sending an email to office@starisland.org. Ticket are \$20/person, \$40/couple if reservations are made ahead of time; \$25/person, \$50/couple at the door.