



# STAR ISLAND NEWSLETTER

Star Island Corporation • Winter 2010 • Volume XXXVI, Issue 1

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

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

## We Did Come Back—To Portsmouth!

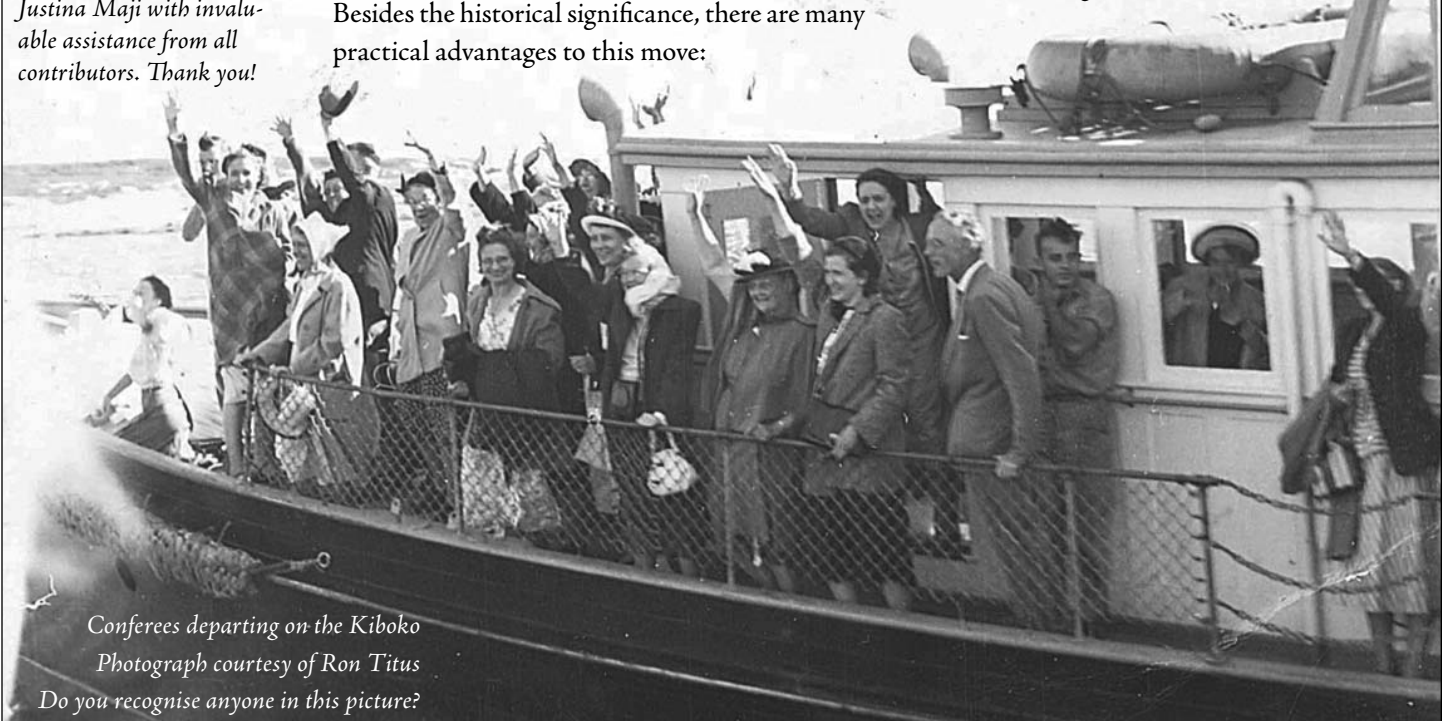
The Isles of Shoals Steamship Company (ISSCo) will once again provide transportation from their dock on Market Street in Portsmouth to Star Island for conference guests and other overnight visitors. Beginning in June, we will sail to Star Island on the M/V Thomas Lughton, the boat that brought Shoalers to Star from the mid-1980s to 2004. For newcomers, the Lughton is a 90-foot vessel with three decks, two of which are fully enclosed and heated. It has the capacity to hold 300, and has many amenities, including a snack bar, several washrooms, comfortable deck chairs and the boat is wheelchair-accessible.

There are many reasons that we are so delighted that Star Island guests will once again embark for their trip to the island from Portsmouth on the Lughton. First, there is a very long history that ties Star Island with ferry service from Portsmouth. Shoalers may remember forerunners to the Lughton: the Viking, the Oceanic and of course, the Kiboko, which provided service from 1946 to 1961.

Besides the historical significance, there are many practical advantages to this move:

- Using the Lughton will allow all participants from a conference to share the experience of arriving at Star together — and going home together.
- Portsmouth is accessible by public transportation, a great boon to those who are coming to Star from Logan or Manchester airports.
- Parking will be simplified; with a paved and well-lit lot, the luggage drop-off will be right next to the boat.
- Simplified parking will mean fewer SIC employees must come into Portsmouth to manage the boarding/disembarking processes.
- More time will be available on the island for between conferences; for cleaning, repairs, and general maintenance in a less rushed environment.
- Early arrivals can take advantage of the hotels right across the street; returning to Portsmouth on Saturday allows lunch and shopping, to extend the Star Island experience for another

*(Continued on Page 3)*



*Conferees departing on the Kiboko*

*Photograph courtesy of Ron Titus*

*Do you recognise anyone in this picture?*

## Flight over Star Island



*Brad Greeley and George Brandenburg*

Brad Greeley, Board President, and Vicky Hardy, CEO, explored Star Island from the air last September in George Brandenburg's four-seater plane. Vicky took detailed photographs of the hotel complex that provided evidence that was used to secure the \$75,000 grant from the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) to make repairs to the Oceanic's roofs.

Vicky said, "I became very aware that

we ARE a small town—hotel, church, power plant, motels, recreation facilities, graveyards. It was a view of a quintessential New England town!"

George and Ellen Brandenburg, long-time International Affairs Conferees, offered to take Brad and Vicky on an over-flight when they met on the island last summer.

One of Vicky's photos appears below. To explore Star Island from the air, visit the new web site and take an interactive aerial tour of Star Island.



*Photographs courtesy of Vicky Hardy*

## Oceanic Hotel to Get a New Roof

The New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) recently awarded \$75,000 in a matching grant to Star Island for replacement and repairs to the roof of the historic Oceanic Hotel complex. Star Island's grant was one of 33 awards to 19 historical sites in New Hampshire and represents the only one in the Seacoast area.

Keith Noyes, Director of Operations and Maintenance said: "It was great news to get this grant and learn we would have help with our obligations to the National Trust for Historic Places and the Rye Historic District Commission in preserving these buildings. The grant plus the matching funds will allow

us to re-roof the entire hotel complex and most importantly protect the historic interior spaces."

The old asphalt shingles will be removed and a layer of ice and water shield will be applied and topped with new asphalt shingles on the Oceanic, Caswell, and Atlantic. It has been about 15-20 years since the last roof project was completed on the hotel.

The New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) is an independent state authority that makes matching grants to NH communities and non-profits to conserve and preserve New Hampshire's most important natural, cultural and historic resources.

## Passages

**Oscar James Allen** was born October 11, 2009 to Kendra Flowers and Ben Allen. Kendra was a former Pelican and they both have attended the IA Conference.

**Frances Brautigam**, passed away in March 2009. Fran was a long-time LOAS I Shoaler who first visited Star Island with her parents when she was only a few years old and continued to visit with her husband Larry and their children and grandchildren. Her grandparents were regular Shoalers beginning in the late 1800s.

**Judy McGill Case**, a Corporation member, former Pelican, volunteer and former member of the Star Island staff passed away in November. She was the daughter of Fred McGill and was the Honorary Chair of the Fred and Ginny McGill Society.

Shoaler **Jack Cavanaugh** passed away on December 6, 2009.

On Nov. 30, former Pelican, Becca Bailey, gave birth to **Bianca Elizabeth Etkin**.

On November 7, 2009, **Reverend Polly Guild**, long time IA, RE and LOAS conferee passed away. She was also a member of the Elderhostel Conference Faculty.

Corporation member and Life on a Star I conferee **Robert D. Joffe** passed away on January 28.

**Roxana Khodadoust Jones** was born on December 18, 2009 to Edmund and Maryam Jones. She attended IA last summer in utero, just like her old man 45 years earlier!

**Andrew Lesser** passed away December 10, 2009 at age 28. Andrew attended the All Star II Conference for many years.

**J. Howard Lightfoot**, Corporation member and long time Natural History and All Star I conferee died on November 12, 2009. He and his wife Dorothy shared a long-standing commitment to Star Island.

IA and IRAS Conferee **Pauline Murray** Passed away on December 4th. \*



*Photograph courtesy of Priscilla Hodgkins*

## *We Did Come Back (Continued)*

- few hours.
- The ISSCo staff is familiar with Star Island, the Shoalers, and our needs. They will be genuine partners in this venture.

Directions to the dock, information about times, logistics of luggage handling and checking in are all being developed as I write this note. Joe Watts and Keith Noyes are working together with Captain Jeremy Bell, the Operations Manager for ISSCo and senior captain for the Laigh-

ton to iron out all the steps for 2010. It is also important to note that the rates for transportation include only a modest increase for adults, none for children and the parking fee is also the same as last year but with much better facilities!

Within days of joining the staff of Star Island, I was contacted by a Shoaler who wanted me to "Please put getting us back to Portsmouth on your list." It has been a consistent suggestion and comment on

the survey forms as well, and now we are happy that, with the help and cooperation of ISSCo, we have "come back to Portsmouth!" Please check the Star Island website for details on transportation.

*- Vicky Hardy, CEO*

# Volunteering



Volunteers are at the heart of the Star Island community. We are a vast organization comprised of people who give freely of themselves, their talent and their time to Star Island. 2009 was my first year conducting Star's volunteer ensemble and oh what a year! The sacredness of space that is Star when imbued with the hearts, hands and minds of people creates a unique harmony that resonates profoundly and leaves me once again grateful to witness the magic that is Star Island.

As behind any successful initiative, the Volunteer Program at SIC is powered by a fleet of phenomenal individuals. I'd like to spotlight the contributions of a few

staff members from a field of many, starting with Athena Steinkraus. Athena, SIC Office Assistant, is the singular source behind most things volunteer and I'm glad to have her commitment and passionate contribution at my side in this endeavor. Assistant Conference Center Director, Shannon Roecklein, with the help of Buildings Manager, Brendan Regan, managed to make the open-up projects a success despite numerous challenges. Ember Fleming, as the On-Island Volunteer Coordinator, set the bar for what we can accomplish with this program with her natural ease and flair for orchestration.

I am looking forward to supporting this great wave once again as we build upon and improve this program. As part of our continued efforts to embrace green practices, we have reduced and or eliminated



much of our volunteer related correspondence in favor of using the website and email whenever possible. In 2010 this will be expanded to our application and surveys. New this year, will be a volunteer interest and talent on-line survey to help us update our database and develop a repository of expertise to draw on more effectively. See the below for a quick guide to volunteering opportunities.

"Volunteering can be an exciting, growing, enjoyable experience. It is truly gratifying to serve a cause, practice one's ideals, work with people, solve problems, see benefits and know one had a hand in them." ~ Harriet Taylor.

Thank you to all who have a hand in the Volunteer Program.

- Sonya Merritt

Human Resources Director

Photographs courtesy of Sean D. Elliot

## Volunteer Opportunities

To sign up or get more information visit [starisland.org](http://starisland.org) or call (603) 430-6272.

- ♦ **Open-up crews** From May 7 to June 6 volunteers clean, paint and make repairs to put everything in order for the summer season. Crews may stay on the island or just come for a weekend. In 2009, 123 volunteers worked more than a total of 2400 hours to get Star Island ready for the season.
- ♦ **During the season** From mid-June to end of September, volunteers work along side Pelicans or on their own. There are also standing volunteer assignments in certain segments of our operations: the First Aid Station and Rutledge Marine Lab incorporate weekly volunteer assignments that help us augment these integral services to our community. This past year, 112 volunteers contributed over 3300 hours during the summer season.
- ♦ **Off Island.** Throughout the year, volunteers worked in the office on Middle Street and at local events. A team of volunteers washed all windows at the office – inside and out! Another crew painted all the walls in the office before we moved in. Others served as hosts and greeters at special local events like Seacoast Day and Market Square Day. Several others lent a hand with Annual Fund mailings, painting, gardening and answering phones. These tireless crews included members of our Board of Directors and conference leadership.

## Starry Night



over 100 works of art while visiting the Isles of Shoals in the late 19th and early 20th century.

These paintings were exhibited at Starry Night, a special fund-raising event for Star Island on Saturday, November 21 at the Discover Portsmouth Center. The evening also featured hors d'oeuvres from Rudi's Restaurant of Portsmouth, wines from Cork and Curds and gourmet chocolates from Byrne and Carlson.

Over 200 people attended the event and just over \$7,000 was raised in ticket sales, raffles and the sale of the paintings. The old library made a perfect gallery for displaying the art and the occasion brought together Shoalers and quite a few Seacoast residents who may visit Star for the first time this summer.

*Volunteer David Boynton welcomes Portsmouth City Council Member Chris Dwyer and New Castle Selectman Loren Buxton to Starry Night. Photograph courtesy of Priscilla Hodgkins*

in 2008 New England regional artists spent a day on Star Island working en *plein air* (creating paintings outdoors directly from nature), a technique made

famous by August Renoir, Claude Monet and Childe Hassam. Many of the Star Island paintings evoke the impressionist style of Childe Hassam who produced

## Firefighter Training

Star Island has selected six employees to participate in a New Hampshire Certified Firefighter I class in an effort to dramatically improve the life saving and fire suppression capability of our on-island Fire Brigade.

This accelerated class is being held at the Star Island office from January through the First week of April. The lead instructor of the class is Bob Irish of Interstate Emergency Unit. Ryan O'Brien, the Island's Fire & Safety Manager, is the Primary Associate Instructor who will be teaching the majority of the classes. The staff members taking the class are: Tietjen Hynes, Island Engineer; Noah Blakney, Logistics and Purchasing Manager; Jim Reef, Dish Crew Supervisor; Jason Knight, Rounder; and Pelicans Sadie MacQuarrie and Pete Sykes. The total commitment for time is 200 hours for each member of the crew.

Ryan O'Brien said, "We are for all intents and purposes on our own if we hope to save a building or its occupants. Having a skilled fire brigade will allow us an extra edge in containing a fire and saving lives."

In a letter to Vicky Hardy, Rye Fire Chief Skip Sullivan personally endorsed this training program, which is a testament to Rye Fire Department's commitment to

working closely with us to improve life safety. In conjunction with this training, the corporation is investing nearly \$20,000 in the program through the purchase of Personal Protective Equipment and SCBA's (Air-Packs) for the trained firefighters to use on island in the event of a fire. This commitment in volunteer time and funding will dramatically improve Star Island's fire safety quotient.



*Photograph courtesy of Ryan O'Brien*

## From the President, Brad Greeley

My family started hauling us to the All Star conference when it began after WWII. In the beginning, there were six of us in the old Chevy going up old Route 1 with lines of weekend traffic, frequent



stops and an occasional overheated radiator. The Fourth of July was always a few days off and many of the towns we passed through had built enormous bonfires, stories high. (This was before fireworks were the thing.) We imagined the conflagration but never got to see one.

We left from the dock where the red Moran tugs are now tied up. The Kiboko was the earliest boat I remember. Once on the water, the trip has changed very little. I remember seeing subs at the base tied up where the Coast Guard ships are now docked. And the naval prison was full of prisoners. We would wave to see if they'd respond and they usually did. Guards and dogs manned the towers and walked the perimeter. Of course, Whale-

back Light had its house and shed roof and looked a lot more like its name.

In early years, I had a special nemesis: Mr. Robinson. I would spend that wonderful boat trip torn between spotting the traditional sights and maybe even something new, and making sure Mr. Robinson didn't button hole me to be part of a talent night skit. It felt as if the gods had given him the job of always planning a bit part for me. Top of my list was not to experience the terror that came with ending up on that stage unable to produce the few sentences I never took the time to memorize. I knew that when I got to the island I had much more important things to do than memorize lines or go to a rehearsal. But, he usually got me, with the connivance of my father. And the routine followed its usual course. Between the threat of being seasick and drafted for the talent show, those early trips were a blend of delight and terror. Landing on the island, no matter what happened on the way, was always salvation.

Some have had much more stressful trips than mine. I can only hope arrival brought that sense of relief and expectation that any vacation and recreation must do. I've seen whale on the trip but never shark. I've been rolled around a good bit but never thrown to the deck. I have lost some things to the sea and almost always lost myself in reveries along the way. I remember a time or two when fog made things a bit dicey and a few passages when the sea was so flat it seemed utterly unreal. My richest memories are of those on board with me, the wonderful anticipation that united us all as we reconnected and set off down the river for our week together.

Some of the strongest memories are of departure and sailing to the mainland. One of the memories I enjoy most happened on the pier as we were waving off the early boat with the melancholy that comes with the final day. There had been a bunch of family there that week including two of my dad's cousins, Roger and his brother, Sam. Sam was on the early boat. We were cheering, singing and waving goodbye as the boat pulled away. Then we saw Rog walking along the edge of the pier waving dramatically and carrying-on the way the two of them had all week – and he walked right off the end of the pier. Fully clothed to our total astonishment and delight.



*Photographs courtesy of Ron Titus*

We're making our plans for that trip now — down the river, again, past Whaleback to the island we know so well. I hope you'll get there, too.

# Community

It is deep winter. Shreds of snow lie about as if grated sparingly over the islands - sitting in the ruts of the grass but melted from the rocks. It's twenty degrees, sunny and blowing fifteen knots from the Northwest. A young male eider duck sits on a rock, his feathers still somewhat blotchy but with the bold black and white pattern becoming visible beneath. He looks about as he grooms, seeming thoroughly pleased, and I can't help wondering what he's thinking or experiencing. If this were a cartoon, the bubble over my large-brained head would contain a question mark as I watch him; the bubble over the eider's, just an exclamation point. Who's to say what's better, but I suspect....

A seal scouts the water of the inner harbor, pushing a snout wave, keeping a low profile. She ducks, and simply disappears... no flash of a long dark body, no other glimpse. I hold my breath for a moment watching, and then remember that *I'm* not underwater... and I breathe again.

I spend a lot of time watching the animals. I've noticed that many different species crowd in amongst each other during a storm - weathering it together. I



Photograph courtesy of Alexandra de Steiguer

know that bathing ducks can inspire gulls to do the same, and before you know it there can be a large crowd of flopping, flapping, feathered bodies filling a large swath of the harbor, and the contagion of their exuberance makes me laugh. I've even seen a snowy owl inspired to bathe in the same puddle that sandpipers had just enjoyed.

I've been asked if I ever get lonely out here in the winter. I don't, and I've figured out why. Even though there are no people, there is still community. The snowy owl sits atop a nearby roof watching the scene just as I watch from my perch. I walk the islands among animals who take note of

me as they would any other living inhabitant. I am respectful of their space, and they become accepting of my near and harmless presence. Seals, ducks, gulls, owls, muskrats... and me.

If their fellowship inspires in me a fuller sense of connection, of shared experience and - ultimately - of contentment, then these animals are my community; those waves too, these rocky islands.

—Alexandra de Steiguer  
Star Island Winter Caretaker  
[www.alexdesteiguer.com](http://www.alexdesteiguer.com)

## Marketing News

- ♦ The new website is up and running with new features that include a video and an interactive map of Star Island. Brian Winters and Justina Maji designed the new pages to attract new people to Star Island and to give Shoalers all the information they like to have at hand. One of the conference chairs reported that a new Shoaler sent in a registration after viewing the video: "He saw the video and knew he had to come."
- ♦ The new Blue Book should have reached your mailbox by now. If you didn't receive one or if you would like to receive more copies just let us know.
- ♦ We are looking for volunteer Ambassadors to help bring new people to Star Island conferences. We know that people 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. The Ambassadors Program was created to help spread the word about Star Island through the people who know it best, those who are steady Shoalers. There are many different ways to help with this effort. Please let us know if you are interested.

The Marketing Team

Justina Maji, Joe Watts and Priscilla Hodgkins

Send email to [phodgkins@starisland.org](mailto:phodgkins@starisland.org) or call (603) 430-6272

## From the Development Office

“Good fortune obligates”

I have been captivated by this simple three-word sentence since I first heard the quote as part of a sermon at Portsmouth’s South Church one Sunday. Attributed to Dr. Albert Schweitzer, the quote gets one’s attention in part because at first glance it appears incomplete. You are drawn toward wanting to know – obligated to what? Then it becomes clear and complete as stated. We are simply obligated by our good fortune. Contributors to the 2009 Annual Fund seemed to embrace this notion. The economy teetered on the brink of disaster all year and yet Shoalers responded with remarkable generosity and gave \$490,378 to the Star Island Annual Fund helping to maintain excellence and meet our mission to support religious, educational, and kindred purposes.

For two years in a row, the All Star I Conference raised more for the Annual Fund than any other conference with \$114,529 in 2008 and \$89,871 in 2009. As a way to remind conferees to give, Larry Yermack and Ned Tillman, the Annual Fund Conference Volunteers, offer a very popular

Texas Hold ‘Em tournament to benefit Star Island and generate lots of laughs in the process. ASI is one of Star’s oldest conferences dating back to the turn of the century. Some summers, there are families in attendance represented by four generations of Shoalers – quite remarkable in itself and more so in the steadfast commitment to a singular vacation home. As noted by an All Star conferee during the Feasibility Study, Star Island is “at the core of my family’s strength and gets us through the year. My oldest and dearest friends have been found on Star.” One ASI Shoaler went further to say that their family gifts to the Star Island Annual Fund sometimes feel self-serving because the family benefits so much from their time on Star. The value of that gift is perhaps best measured in the values gained and the ideals and motivation every family takes home with them, gleaned from theme speakers, evening chapel homilies, workshop presentations or just sitting on the Oceanic porch swapping parenting advice with a friend. Ultimately, the Star mission has the capacity to make a better world – one Shoaler at a time. Mirroring All Star volunteer fundraising efforts,

there were 38 volunteers representing 14 conferences who worked for the Star Island Annual Fund in 2009. One successful initiative launched by volunteers for several conferences was to achieve 100 percent participation. And, they did! All the Annual Fund volunteers are listed at the end of the newsletter on the Volunteer Honor Roll with our gratitude for delivering stellar results year after year.

There were notable fundraising successes off Star Island in 2009 as well. A grant of \$75,000 was awarded by the State of New Hampshire Land and Community Investment Heritage Program (L-CHIP) to re-roof Oceanic and will be matched by donors to the Shining the Star Campaign. Another success took place on November 21st when over 200 Shoalers and friends of Star attended the first annual Starry Night Exhibition and Wine Tasting raising over \$7,000 for the Annual Fund. By popular demand, the event will be repeated in 2010 (save the date - Saturday, November 20th) and joined by a new on-Island event – the Gosport Regatta. Watch for more details on this re-creation of the historic sail race initiated by John Poor of Stickney and Poor who once owned the Oceanic and hosted the race to get people out to Star. 500 boats set sail for the event in 1873 and more than 50 participated in the race. The famous yacht America won the race. There is a firm and energetic pulse these days at 30 Middle Street and it’s contagious. So, be forewarned, we want you to be a part of it all!

With Star Spirit,

—Angela Matthews  
Director of Development



Kris LoFrumento, Shayna Appel, and Thais Archambeault at Chairs and Registrars 2009 meeting

Photograph courtesy of Priscilla Hodgkins



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*Photograph courtesy of Jeff Spoor*

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