

Star Island

SPRING 2016 · VOLUME XXXX, ISSUE 3



100 YEARS!

There is so much to celebrate about Star Island and our nonprofit Star Island Corporation. I am grateful for the many thousands of Shoalers who have come together for so many years to live our values and to keep the Star Island mission and vision alive.

My family's history with Star is deep and meaningful. There is nothing

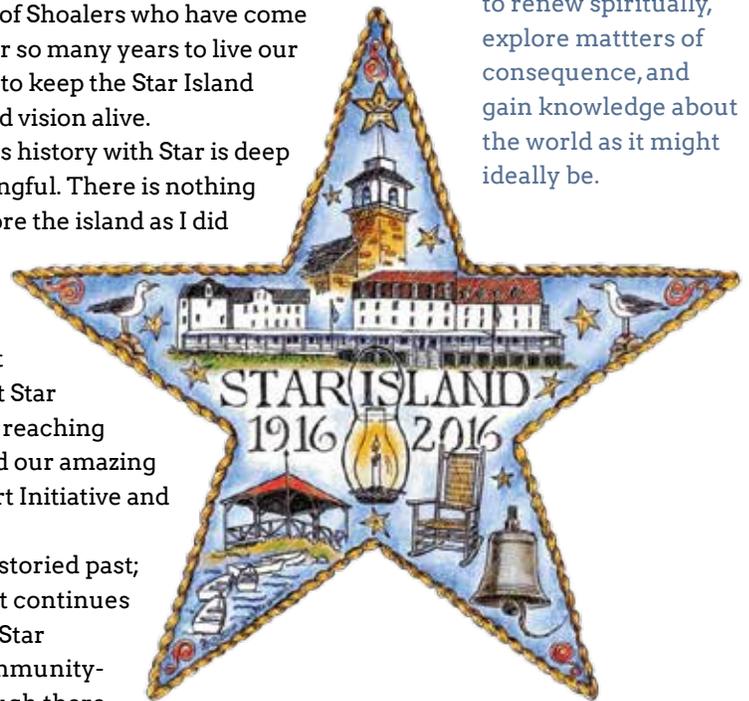
that brings me more joy than watching my two children explore the island as I did when I arrived as an intrepid 11 year old. Memories of kite "fighting" with other kids on the lawn and playing Dungeons & Dragons in the Snack Bar Alcove are among my favorites. At the risk of sounding corny, our experiences at Star truly create memories that last a lifetime. I am proud that Star is protecting its traditions and connection with the past while reaching out to new friends and taking the necessary steps to safeguard our amazing island for the future through programs like the Green Gosport Initiative and preservation efforts of the Oceanic.

In this Centennial Newsletter, you will read about Star's storied past; the hardships, the resilience, the allure of a rugged place that continues to provide us all with 360 degrees of possibility. The spirit of Star Island thrives in no small part due to our volunteers and community-mindedness. Many of our summer conferences are full, though there are some spaces left—I urge you to reach out to your friends soon and encourage them to visit and discover the joys of becoming a Shoaler. Word of mouth is our best advertising—you can make a difference!

As we celebrate our Centennial, we do so with an eye to the future. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that the Star Island experience lives on, and your continued involvement and support is deeply appreciated. See you soon!

Joe Watts
Star Island Corporation CEO

OUR VISION is to create on Star Island an environment that frees all who come to renew spiritually, explore matters of consequence, and gain knowledge about the world as it might ideally be.



Star Island Star by Artist and Illustrator Gretchen Gudefin

OUR MISSION is to hold and maintain Star Island and such other property as the Corporation may hold or acquire, as a center for religious, education, and kindred purposes consistent with the principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association and the United Church of Christ.

Star Island News

Starry Night Success!



Last November, **Dudley W. Dudley** gave a well-received and inspiring presentation on how she and a group of local activists thwarted plans for an oil refinery to be built at the Isles of Shoals in the 1970s. More than 80 people attended, raising nearly \$13,000.

Star Island Veteran Raffle

Jeffrey Spoor, a Navy and Army National Guard veteran, won our third annual Veteran's Raffle, randomly selected from over 70 entries. Spoor, who has been a conferee several times in the past, will receive a free week on Star Island in 2016—upon learning he won, Spoor said, "The worst part of coming to Star Island is having to leave."

Major Grants Awarded

Grants were recently awarded to help Star Island preserve and protect its collections in the Celia Thaxter Museum at Vaughn Cottage. A grant for a Conservation Assessment carried out in 2014 set the stage for our winning a second Museums for America grant from Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) for \$24,990. This will allow us to improve Vaughn Cottage and support two interns for summer of 2016 to better manage and preserve our collections. In addition, a National Endowment for the Humanities Preservation Assistance Grant (PAG) was received to support these efforts. Thanks to the Island Heritage & Artifacts Committee, Advisor and Museum Conservator, **Barbara Moore, Chair Irene Bush, and Craig Allhouse** and his crew who all played important roles in making this possible! Thanks also to **Lois Williams** for her generous gift to purchase Shoals-related maps, and to help us develop a Vaughn brochure and bookmark.

Centennial Celebration

July 22 & 23

On Island Centennial Celebration
<http://starisland.org/centennial>



Creating Community Partnerships



The **Boat Shop at Strawberry Banke Museum** and the **Trade Construction Program at Portsmouth High School** worked all winter to refurbish Star Island's fleet of six rowboats. This collaborative project was generously sponsored by the **Isles of Shoals Association UU**. Thank you to all who helped make this possible!

Gosport Regatta

2015 marked the sixth year of the Gosport Regatta. We enjoyed a full weekend of festivities with 42 boats racing in windy conditions. We also expanded the event to include family-focused components such as a movie night and kite festival. **Thank you to our partners:** Piscataqua Sailing Association and Fun With Wind. Dave Finklestein provided an incredible barbeque lunch for over a hundred island guests. **SAVE THE DATE** for the 2016 Regatta—**September 24 & 25**—registration opens in mid-May! Thank you to our very generous sponsors!

LCHIP Award Ceremony at the NH State Capitol



Governor Maggie Hassen presented us with the award from the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program. (L to R: Suellen Peluso (Board); Joe Watts (CEO); David Borden (NH Rep. District 24 and Star Island supporter); Dick Case (Strategic Facilities Planning Committee Chair); Governor Maggie Hassen; Roger Kellman (Property Standards Chair); Pam Smith (Director of Development); Jack Farrell (Island Manager & Director of Facilities).

140 Years at Sea: The Oceanic Hotel on Star Island

BY ANN BEATTIE



Desperation. Opportunity. As fishing from the Isles of Shoals became less and less lucrative, residents of Star Island scrambled to make a living in the mid-1800s. Along came a wealthy Boston merchant with an offer to buy their land; all but two families leapt at the chance. That merchant was John Poor of the famed Stickney and Poor Mustard & Spice Emporium and in 1873 he built a grand resort hotel on Star Island to rival the neighboring Appledore House.

The newly constructed Oceanic could sleep 300 guests. There were two bowling alleys, a billiard room with four tables, a bar and a grocery. The hotel boasted a dining room that could seat 400; a dancing hall and orchestra; sailboats, rowboats and schooner yachts for guests; one of the first elevators in an American hotel; guests' choice of a warm or cool saltwater or fresh water bath; and mail delivery from the mainland three times daily. The grand Oceanic Hotel received rave reviews from all but the Star Island families who regretted having sold their land and missed living on the Shoals. They referred to the hotel as the "Poor House." After three glorious seasons, the

"Mr. Poor, with dauntless energy, commenced at once to build the present Oceanic before the ashes of the first building cooled off." —Oscar Laighton.

original Oceanic burned to the ground. The glow of flames could be seen from Boston.

In true, creative Shoals fashion, John Poor assembled another Oceanic Hotel. Constructed from two existing boarding houses, Gosport House and the Atlantic, along with the home of a former Shoaler and some leftover lumber, the second Oceanic rose to greet guests on Star Island. "Mr. Poor, with dauntless energy, commenced at once to build the present Oceanic before the ashes of the first building cooled off," exclaimed Oscar Laighton.

The new Oceanic could host almost 200 guests. Rooms were outfitted with electric bells and gas lighting supplied from an on-island coal conversion plant. There was a spacious reading room and parlor and a ballroom with a stage, curtain and scenery, now known as Elliot

Hall. The bathrooms boasted "open plumbing and perfect drainage"—quite an amenity in 1876. Fireplaces were lit and rosebushes were planted along the walkway. The Oceanic attracted a vibrant young crowd of travelers in search of the latest modern amenities.

In the century and a half between 1800 and 1950, just over 150 grand resort hotels were built on the New England seacoast. Fewer than ten still exist today, as most of the wooden structures fell victim to fire. Only one of those ten remaining grand hotels hasn't been completely renovated—and that hotel's majestic rooftop outline graces the shoreline of Star Island. The Oceanic Hotel is still hosting hundreds of guests who come to Star Island for spiritual renewal, education and entertainment, just as a multitude of guests did in centuries past.

THANK YOU to the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) which generously awarded \$100,000 to help our historic preservation efforts on the Oceanic Hotel. The Oceanic was designated as a New Hampshire *Seven to Save* site by the NH Preservation Alliance in 2015. This gift must be matched! If you are interested in supporting the Fund for the Oceanic, please contact Pam Smith at psmith@starisland.org

Oceanic Talks

In 2016, we launched a series of historic talks led by Ann Beattie across New Hampshire to raise awareness about the Oceanic Hotel, and our preservation efforts. Thank you to our collaborative partners who include LCHIP, the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance, the Portsmouth Athenaeum, Pierce Manse in Concord, the New Castle Public Library, Moffatt-Ladd House and the New Hampshire Historical Society.

Sun and Star

BY JACK FARRELL

Star Island's new solar power system is dramatically reducing fossil fuel consumption in favor of renewable energy. Compared to 2012, diesel consumption in 2015 was down 71% and that trend is expected to continue in 2016. We anticipate that this year electricity generated from our solar array will provide 60% of our power use at Star Island. Have you noticed it's quieter with the generators running less? A nice byproduct!

As anticipated, the first full year of system operation brought some early start up challenges. Dick Case, electrical engineer and Chair of the Strategic Facilities Planning Committee, continued to work closely with Star Island Power, LLC, our independent solar power provider, to monitor and optimize the system's performance. We are pleased to report that considerable progress was made in the area of aligning island infrastructure and operations to make the most of the new system.

Lessons learned in 2015 will enable us to use even more solar power (and corresponding reduction in diesel use) for 2016 in some key areas. In addition to overall load reduction, we will be matching electricity demand to times when solar output is highest. Technical and software upgrades to the solar power control system this year should increase overall output and reliability. Planned efficiency upgrades in refrigeration units will further reduce overall load. Water filtration and storage upgrades will reduce energy demand for drinking water.

This work has attracted considerable attention as the island's regional reputation as a leader in sustainability has continued to grow through television, radio, magazine and newspaper coverage about these initiatives over the past year.

Looking ahead, we hope to continue progress in energy efficiency improvements and seek donations, grants and other funding for additional investment in solar panels and battery systems. A review of the island's long-term energy goals will be a major component of updates to the Strategic Plan now underway.



JACK FARRELL, FACILITIES MANAGER AND KRISTEN SIMARD, ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES MANAGER

Work Moves Ahead on Design and Permitting for New Wastewater System

The application for state approval is in and final design work is moving ahead on the proposed innovative, energy efficient wastewater system for the island. It's called a membrane bioreactor (MBR): German technology distributed in NH through Applied Onsite Solutions.

This groundbreaking proposal would be the first of its kind in New Hampshire and would build upon the island's strong record in sustainability by converting yet another island waste product back into a critical and valuable resource.

The application was made under New Hampshire's Innovative/Alternative Systems program, which encourages new environmental approaches to on-site treatment of wastewater. The technology is now under review by the NH Department of Environmental Services. Once we get the go-ahead, we will submit our proposal to upgrade our wastewater treatment system using the Busse MBR technology.

MBR systems treat wastewater through a combination of settlement, filtration and aerobic microbial treatment that improve system reliability and aesthetics, and reduce

energy consumption and operation costs. The Busse Green Technologies system produces wastewater product treated to NSF certified standards for non-potable reuse. Energy costs for wastewater treatment could be reduced to less than half of current levels.

MBR technology offers a number of other benefits to the unique challenges of wastewater treatment at the island. The technology is capable of providing year round service, and is well suited to Star's seasonal operation and dramatic fluctuations in effluent volume. Recycled and purified wastewater can be used to flush toilets (eliminating salt water in the system), water thirsty lawns along with other potential uses, all the while reducing the need to discharge effluent back into the Atlantic.

The system would be housed within the existing wastewater treatment facility and would include enclosing the present tanks with a roof to provide protection and shield it from public view.

Final approval for the proposed \$1,000,000 system is anticipated by the end of 2016. We are also in the process of identifying potential funding for the project including grants and low interest loans under EPA and the State's CWSRF Revolving Loan Fund for which Star has recently received eligibility.

Star Island's Three Meetinghouses

BY LOIS WILLIAMS

The Isles of Shoals were split between Massachusetts (now Maine) and New Hampshire in 1679, and Shoalers moved from Hog Island (now Appledore) to Star Island. The meetinghouse became the most important building in the village. But constructing it wasn't easy. There were no tall trees at the Shoals, so residents used timbers salvaged from a wrecked Spanish ship that went down while bringing salt for the fishermen in exchange for their fish. An old sign on the rear wall of the chapel says, "Originally constructed of the timbers from the wreck of a Spanish ship, A.D. 1685."

The first meetinghouse served as a church and more. The minister preached to the fishermen and their families. It's also served as a community meeting place and a schoolhouse. Other times it was used to store dried fish. The meetinghouse was on a high part of Star Island, and long before there was a lighthouse on White Island, its bell warned fishermen of dangerous rocks, and its squat tower served as a landmark to guide them home. The first meetinghouse burned in 1720, and Shoalers immediately built their second meetinghouse.

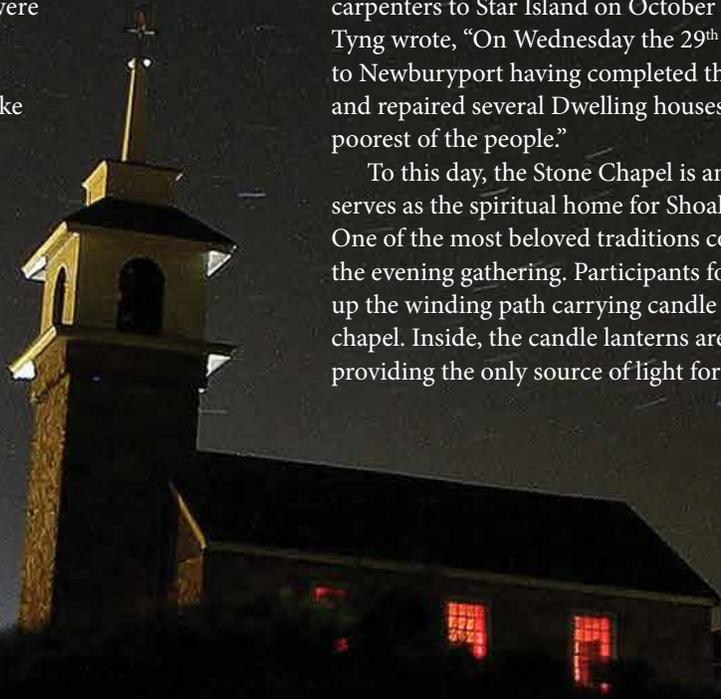
Star Island had been part of the Town of Rye until 1715, when New Hampshire separated the island as the Town of Gosport. New England towns were required to "maintain religious worship," and the townspeople "called" the Reverend John Tucke to Gosport as its minister in 1732. The town paid his salary in "merchantable codfish," and the fish were so valuable that he was the highest paid minister in New England. Reverend Tucke kept the Gosport Church Records, where he listed the couples he married and the 700 babies he baptized. The Tucke Monument, built in 1914 by a distant relative, honors Reverend Tucke's 41-year ministry.

At the beginning of the Revolutionary War, all Shoalers were required to leave the islands. After the war, a few moved back to the islands, but fishermen could no longer ship fish to Spain or the West Indies and the islanders were poor. Mainlanders considered them "wretched and drunken," and Shoalers were thought to have burned the wooden meetinghouse because they had no other firewood to keep warm. Dudley Tyng, the customs officer at Newburyport, tried to help the islanders. He contacted a Boston missionary group, The Society for Propagating the Gospel Among Indians and Others in North America.

Mr. Tyne and the Society's Reverend Jedidiah Morse visited the large churches of the seaport towns to raise money for a new church at Gosport that would be built of stone this time. "Five hundred [dollars] was subscribed in Salem, three hundred in Portsmouth, about one hundred in Exeter, and the remainder, about five hundred dollars, was taken up in Boston and Newburyport."

Remarkably, the stone meetinghouse was built in less than ten days. Stones for the walls had already been quarried and dressed and site preparation completed when Mr. Tyng brought other materials and 14 carpenters to Star Island on October 20, 1800. Later Mr. Tyng wrote, "On Wednesday the 29th we all returned to Newburyport having completed the Meetinghouse and repaired several Dwelling houses inhabited by the poorest of the people."

To this day, the Stone Chapel is an iconic relic that serves as the spiritual home for Shoalers and visitors. One of the most beloved traditions continues to be the evening gathering. Participants form a procession up the winding path carrying candle lanterns to the chapel. Inside, the candle lanterns are hung on the wall, providing the only source of light for the evening service.





PASSAGES

Star Island staff member **Warren Simard** passed away on April 16, 2016.

International Affairs conferee **Thea Braiterman** passed away March 28, 2016.

UCC conferee and Corporation member **Dorothy "Dot" Glaser** passed away on March 20, 2016.

Long time Shoaler, former Star Island staff member and Corporation member **Edith Pierson** passed away March 14, 2016.

Corporation member **Peter Meek** passed away on March 12, 2016.

Lifetime Shoaler **Ellen Bryant** passed away on March 12, 2016.

Long time conferee and Corporation member **Deborah "Debby" Merritt** passed away on February 19, 2016.

All Star 1 conference leader and conferee **Roy Cook** passed away on February 15, 2016.

Logan Ulysses Vega was born on February 5, 2016. Logan is the son

of **Dawn Pry and Justin Vega**, and grandson of LRE conferees and Corporation members **Jessica and Ralph Vega**.

Long time conferee **Charlotte "Cha" Brewer** passed away on January 22, 2016.

Star Gathering 1 conferee **Nancy "Joan" Wiggin** passed away on November 28, 2015.

Cassidy James Dowdall-Fowler was born on November 21, 2015 to former Pelicans **Mara Dowdall and Ben Fowler**.

All Star 1 conferee and Corporation member **Peter Williams** passed away on November 14, 2015.

Lucas Andrew Dickerman was born on October 15, 2015 to Star Gathering 1 conferees **AJ and Thais Dickerman**.

Aliyah Beatrice Jablonski was born on August 25, 2015 to Star Island Ministers **Lauren Smith and Chris Holton Jablonski**.

Longtime conferee **Robert Fischer** passed away on August 19, 2015.

Bethany Russell Lowe and Bryan Russell married on August 15, 2015. Bethany is the daughter of All Star 2 conferees and Corporation members **Sally Russell and Rodney Lowe**.

LOAS and Star Arts conferee and Corporation member **Herb Emers** passed away on August 14, 2015.

IRAS conferee **Betty Hoskins** passed away on June 20, 2015.

Amelia Maji was born on May 6, 2015 to Star Island staff and Corporation member **Justina Maji** and former staff member **Sumar Maji**.

Stanley Chojnacki was born on April 17, 2015. Stanley is the son of former Pelican **Kate Bradley Chojnacki and husband Chris Chojnacki** and grandson to All Star 2 conferee **Jim Bradley**.

Sophia Scott was born on January 30, 2015. Sophia is the daughter to former Pelican **Nicola Bradley-Scott** and husband **Zach Scott** and granddaughter to All Star 2 conferee **Jim Bradley**.

Longtime Shoaler **Elsa Peterson** and Corporation member passed away on March 3, 2016.

Emma June Tripp was born on February 18, 2016. Grandparents are Corporation member **Dave Brown and Teri Worth**.

Grey Arlen O'Donnell was born on November 15, 2015 to All Star II conferees **Christina "Tyne" Allshouse and Timothy S. O'Donnell**.

Writing A Page For The Star Island Memorial Book

Your description should give your loved one's history with a focus on how he or she was involved with Star Island and/or what Star Island meant to him or her. There is no cost but a gift in memory is always welcome. Visit www.starisland.org/donate/memorials for more information.



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