

Our mission since 1915 is to hold and administer Star Island and other properties we acquire for religious, educational and kindred purposes.

Star Island Corporation



**Star Island Corporation:
Ninety Years and Going
Strong!**

From the President

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You may not know that Directors of the Star Island Board may serve a total of nine years. They need only to be elected to each three year term for which they are eligible. Fortunately, during my time on the Board, I have found that our Nominating Committee screens carefully and calls persons with the devotion, sense of responsibility and skills essential to making good decisions for Star Island.

I'm halfway through my eighth year on the SIC Board and looking forward to serving the full nine years. Although not the first to serve nine years, I believe I am the first Board member to be elected from outside the greater Boston area—that formerly mysterious geographic circle that supplied those who for so long ministered to and succored our beloved Star.

Since my election, Board members come from increasingly far off places—New York City, Rhode Island and another from New Jersey. Now, we can conference call folks into meetings when travel is impossible. A wider view about who can serve Star Island and the blessings of technology allow the Board, its committees and work groups, the Council of Conferences, Annual Fund Representatives and others access to the many wonderful people who contribute their time and talent to Star Island.

It is a very different Board and a very different Star Island that we volunteers now steward. I began as a Director at a point when, under Dick Howe's leadership, we responded to a very thorough and chastening analysis of our finances,

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Update on the Executive Director Search

The Executive Director Search Committee has completed its work. After reading through 157 resumes and interviewing a large number of candidates, they winnowed the field down to six persons who received a second interview. On Saturday, October 15th, the Search Committee announced to the Star Island Board of Directors and those present at the Council of Conferences meet-

ing their unanimous choice of two finalists, both of whom are women. These two candidates will be interviewed by the SIC Board in mid-November and a final decision will be made.

The SIC Board currently envisions that the Executive Director will primarily be based in the Portsmouth office, but able to be on Star

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This issue of the Star Island Corporation Newsletter was edited and produced by Hilary Niles with the assistance of all contributors. Thank you!

From the Executive Director

By most measures, the 2006 conference season was very successful and representative of Star's abiding strength, that of a strong and vital community dedicated to a common purpose. With extraordinary support from conference leadership teams working closely with staff, we came within eight conferees of setting a record for conference attendance; 3,799 Shoalers attended conferences in 2005, representing a 3.5% increase over last year. Near-record attendance helped us exceed our budget goals by at least \$90,000 and enables us to continue the restoration of our cash reserve accounts.

This season saw the most extensive array of capital projects in many years. Prior to beginning the season, we completed the construction of two new fire tower stairwells in Gosport, replaced our fire alarm system, properly grounded our electrical system, installed two reverse osmosis desalination units, upgraded our plumbing including all new bathrooms in Gosport, removed cistern water from conference living areas, and painted the interior walls of the chapel. Over the course of the summer, we replaced the chapel roof, restored the chapel steeple, replaced the Gosport mansard roof, and removed obsolete external fire-escapes on Gosport and Oceanic. Post season and weather permitting, we expect to complete the replacement of the Dining Room/Elliott roof and build an external fire escape on Caswell. The summer of 2005 also marked the beginning of new ferry services provided by the *M/V Captain's Lady*. From all the information I have, the

partnership between Star Island Corporation and Captain's Fishing Charters, the company that owns the vessel, promises to be mutually beneficial for years to come.

The amount of capital work and the push to maximize attendance created strains this summer, which will be addressed for next year. Once the conference season began we had all we could do just to keep up with weekly trash; thus, construc-

tion debris accumulated over the summer. All of that material—160 yards worth—has now been removed and the old dump area is once again completely free of refuse. With many of the large construction projects now behind us, my hope is that efforts to repair and paint building exteriors can once again be a top priority. We also learned this summer that permitting conferences to register as many as 275 conferees stretches our ability to maintain excellent services, so we will return to conference sizes in the range of 260 to 265 for next season.

As I look toward my final three months as Executive Director, my objective is to put things in order to the greatest extent possible for the new Executive Director. One of my most important tasks will be to complete a multi-year contract with the new boat company and make all of the logistical arrangements, including parking, before the new Director comes on board. Also, we intend to enter into a longer term contract with

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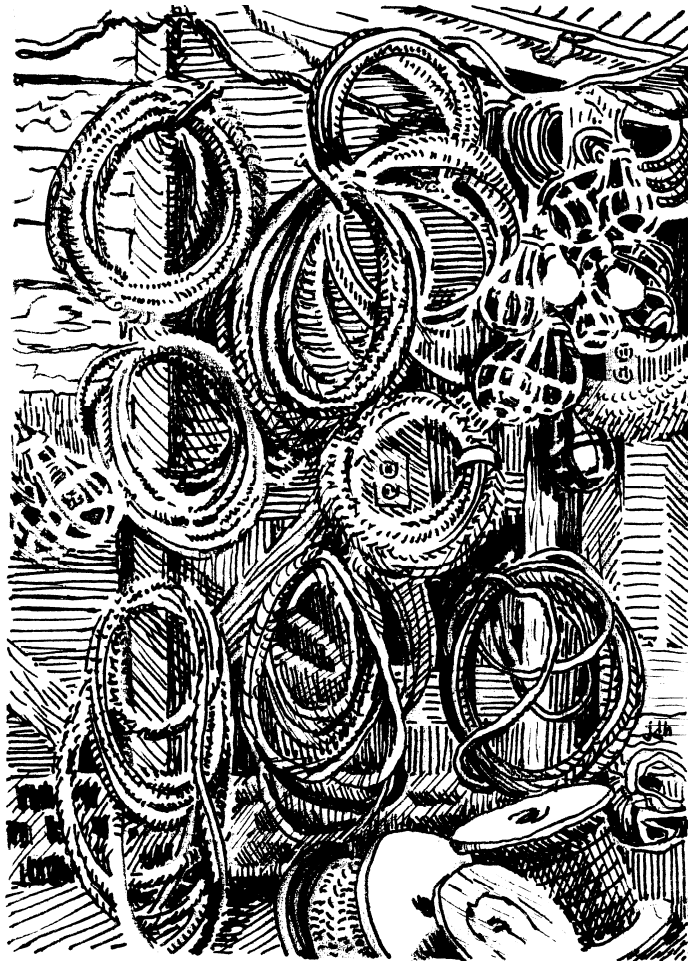


Illustration courtesy Joyce Homan.

(From the President, continued from page 1)

began a strategic planning process and found that it was time for new professional leadership. These three actions laid the foundation for much of the work that has occurred since.

I am proud to say that every Board member has been an active contributor to planning and overseeing the big picture for Star and, individually, has also taken responsibility for specific areas like personnel, facilities, searches and so on. We take our responsibilities very seriously and, as much as we try to deal with policy and oversight, we often roll up our sleeves, change hats and volunteer in some capacity or other like many of you. If we have a motto, it echoes one sorely needed in our troubled larger world: "Preparedness in an age of uncertainty." Our uncertainties do not have the same terrible global consequences—but wind, weather, our aging infrastructure, homeland security, regulations from governmental groups, the vagaries of suppliers and other factors have serious impact on Star. I suspect my fellow Board members believe as I do that leadership is the key to our health, viability, wisdom and security for Star and the Shoals.

We have been very lucky in Paul Jennings. I believe he has been as good a leader as we could have had for the last seven years. While the Board has not succeeded in giving Paul all of the financial and staffing resources he needed to accomplish our very ambitious capital and maintenance goals (while also dealing with emergencies of the pier, boat contracts, water making, lightning and fire protection), we have come a long way in doing so. The Board that existed before I joined did well to professionalize our leadership in Tony Coddling; but Tony, for the most part, kept us afloat with meager resources.

We are again at a change point. What are the needs and the hopes we have for our next leader? Have we got the finances and the staffing right so that our successes and the resulting security for our island can be even greater over the next years? Can we continue to develop the resources that will permit our next leader to be even more successful in keeping Star in shape to be our spirit's home?

The Board will be focusing on ensuring that the resources for success are in place. As during Bill Clegg's leadership and mine, the Board continues to monitor and improve both the sound

financial and facilities planning that we've begun and our efforts to raise the funds to accomplish essential work. We will be partnering with staff to modify our written plans as necessary, accomplish the next series of projects, and communicate about this with you.

As we begin the budgeting process for next year, we are taking a very careful look at expenses. The major strain on our budget has been necessary and mandated capital projects—the pier, the Oceanic and Gosport egress projects, and the soon to be undertaken egress projects in Cottages A and D. Prudence and necessity have moved us to undertake additional projects, such as making our own water and installing a new fire board and lightning protection. We have also grown our administrative budget and we must ensure that we are getting the bang we need for the bucks we are spending. Our Finance Committee and the entire Board are committed to ensuring that we are right-sized to accomplish necessary work and to realize economies as a result.

At the same time, we must continue to develop the financial resources to support our capital, maintenance, and staffing needs. Our Director of Development and Community Relations has been a wise investment in our future. We see great gains in our annual appeal with its growing number of Shoalers giving what they can to support Star, including a growing number of Sustaining Stewards who are in the enviable position of making truly substantial donations over five years. All of these gifts—the many at \$25, \$50 or \$100 and those at \$5,000, \$10,000, \$15,000 and \$20,000—sustain our future. While we are not all equal in the amounts we can give, we are all equal in our ability to give as much as we are able to a place we love. Our endowment is growing slowly and steadily, and many Shoalers have let us know that they have joined the Fred and Ginny McGill Society by writing Star into their wills. This represents initiatives taken by the Board and the trustees of our endowment, the Permanent Trust.

Attention to the financial support of Star is a major responsibility of the Board of Directors. Our fall meetings, in large part, are devoted to examining expenses and potential income as the budget for the next year is created. In our last budget cycle, after a great deal of debate and with

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(From the Executive Director, continued from page 2)

Captain's Fishing Charters. The owners of the company commissioned the construction of a new vessel for their off-shore work, which will free up the *M/V Captain's Lady II* for our use. Unfortunately, the new vessel is being built in Louisiana and its completion has been delayed by Hurricane Katrina. As a result, we will start next season with the *Captain's Lady*, the boat we used this summer, until the larger and roomier *Captain's Lady II* is available.

We also expect to move the ferry service from Portsmouth to Rye Harbor. Rye is easily accessible from Interstate 95 and for those who wish to visit Portsmouth, it is about a 20 minute ride to the center of Portsmouth using coastal Route 1A. The trip to the island from Rye is about 30 minutes, half the travel time from Portsmouth. The shorter distance enables us to make two round trips in the morning to take departing conferences to town before making two round trips in the afternoon to bring arriving conferences to Star. This schedule, and more room for parking, will ease much of the in-town congestion we experienced this summer and make for a more manageable changeover on the island. I am also working with local boat companies to increase daily options for access to the island. The *M/V Uncle Oscar* will make four round trips per day to and from Rye,

beginning early in the morning. These additional runs will make it possible to visit the island for a day and will also give late arriving or early departing conferees more options for travel to and from the island. You can expect much more detailed information later in the winter and well before the start of the new conference season.

When I announced my intention to retire last winter, I promised that I would do all in my power to make this, my last season, the best that I could. I am pleased by what was accomplished this year and deeply grateful to the hundreds of Shoalers who were partners in that effort. Lisa and I were deeply touched by the many expressions of gratitude we received over the course of the summer and are appreciative for having had a chance to serve the Corporation and the island. We are pleased to have done our part, and leave with confidence that the future of the Corporation and the island are in good and capable hands. We look forward to returning to our mainland home and also dream of our family's return to Star as conferees, Corporation members, and volunteers. Star is in our blood and we have no doubt that we will greet many of you on the front porch of the Oceanic in years to come!

± # *Paul Jennings*

To a Bright Future

On October 15th, Shoalers celebrated Paul Jennings' devoted leadership of our beloved Star Island for the last seven years along with his wife, Lisa Jennings, at the Seacoast Science Center at Odiorne Point, Rye, NH. Paul and Lisa received a framed photograph of the turnstile recreated by Will Fielding and donated in their honor by their home conference, All Star 1. They also received a framed watercolor by Star Island Bookstore staff and artist, Meg Schoene, as well as accolades and a rousing S-T-A-R from those assembled.

In the words expressed by President Irene Bush, all agree that "Paul has helped ensure Star a safer, more efficient and economical future" and wish he and Lisa well on this next phase of their life journey. They have our gratitude.

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Photo courtesy Sean D. Elliot.

Lisa and Paul Jennings, recognized at a retirement party in October for their years of service to Star Island.

From the Director of Development & Community Relations

The on island Annual Fund campaign, like the conference season, has come to a close. Staff are preparing Star Island for the winter now, following up with maintenance projects not gotten to earlier in the year and securing buildings against the inevitable demands of winter. Fall is the season for following up with the Annual Fund as well.

We are nearly \$70,000 away from reaching the goal needed to secure Star Island throughout the winter. Much of what we do to provide the conference season has to be done before we finish out the Annual Fund, and we do this on faith that everyone will contribute to the best of their ability.

If you haven't yet made a contribution, please consider what Star means to you and do so today. If you have already given in advance of or during the summer, please think about sending an additional year end gift in support of Star's year round needs.

Here are a few examples of what your gift represents in 2005:

- Can of paint—\$30
- Wheelbarrow—\$54
- Containers to preserve documents in Vaughn—\$85
- Case of stainless steel nails—\$140
- One week's fuel to run the work boat (*M/V Pamela J. Thayer*)—\$220
- Oven repairs & service—\$518
- Six new toilets plus parts—\$806
- Six months of telecommunication service between Star and the mainland—\$1,152

In the next issue of this newsletter you will hear about the wonderful successes brought about because of the dedication of our volunteer Annual Fund representatives and you will see the names of the many Shoalers who made a contribution to Star Island in 2005. I hope we will include each one of you on that list. What a glory it would be to add pages to the newsletter for a benefice such as that.

As you read and consider the many fundraising appeals you will undoubtedly receive this time of year, please place Star Island—your Spirit's Home—at the top of your philanthropic list. Our needs are great and continuous, and it is only with great and continuous support that we will survive into the future.

Please give as generously as you can and know that all gifts are gratefully received. If you have questions or ideas please feel free to share them with me.

Gifts with Purpose

While Star most needs unrestricted funds to meet its budget and have leeway for items and projects not anticipated, restricted gifts are also necessary and appreciated. In 2005, we utilized restricted gifts from individuals to replace and repair porch rockers, purchase sporting and Marine Lab equipment, tune and repair Star Island pianos, pay stipends to section leaders for Pel Chorus, purchase exercise equipment for Pels, provide the Art Barn with field and table easels, and plant flowers in the cutting garden, on the front lawn, and around buildings in the Stone Village. Re-

stricted gifts also made it possible for us to make improvements and repairs to the First Aid Station, Doctors, Chapel, Art Barn, and Louise's Barn. If you would like to make a restricted gift or start an endowed fund to pay for an ongoing need like building repairs, please let me know. I would be happy to discuss the many opportunities we have for these kinds of contributions. You can reach me at the office by phone or by email at dtombleson@starisland.org.

± # *Deborah Lielasus Tombleson*

Chapel Restoration

Thanks to the wonderful generosity of the Isles of Shoals Unitarian Universalist Association (ISA(UU)), the Star Island United Church of Christ (SIUCC), and the Brookfield family (in memory of Phyllis Brookfield), the Star Island chapel renovations are nearly complete.

Volunteers from the SIUCC, led by Dave Boynton, repaired, cleaned, and painted the interior. Bob Frye's construction company and Star Island Pelicans applied red cedar roof shingles (No. 1, blue perfection, squared and re-sawn, 18" long) with stainless steel single nails over cedar breather material. This provides the longest lasting wood shingle roof in the architectural character we associate with the chapel. Bob's crew then addressed bell tower and steeple repairs and repainting.

From the National Register of Historic Places inventory description, we find that the meeting house is one of the oldest religious buildings in New Hampshire and Maine. The fourth meeting house at the Shoals and the third on this site, the structure is unique among the Federal period church buildings of New England in its stone construction. The building is also interesting in its floor plan: at a time when builders of religious structures in northern New England had not yet adopted the "church plan," with the main entrance at one end and the pulpit at the opposite end, the Star Island chapel retains the side en-

trance of early meeting houses of the region. Early photographs reveal that the original wooden bell tower of the Star Island meeting house was almost identical to the present tower, which was designed and built by the well-known Shoals carpenter, author, and poet Oscar Leighton in 1892.

Star Island's chapel is significant for its place in architectural history, its link to early New England, and the many Shoaler families who have been married, blessed, and remembered within its walls. It is the place where we come together and share our better selves with each other, and it is right and good that we care for it accordingly.

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Photo courtesy Linda Anderle.

Workers continue restoration efforts on the chapel, a project made possible by the ISA(UU), SIUCC, and Brookfield Family.



Report from the Chapel Accessibility Survey Committee

Conferences are over and we are now studying the surveys that were filled out last summer.

We can share some of the numbers with you at this point. We received over four hundred completed surveys, ranging from 14 from one of the smaller conferences to 83 from one of the largest. There were 806 responses to the nine questions asked, and most people checked more than one option. By far the largest number of responses was for "C," to improve the path at 201. The sec-

ond largest, a little more than half that number, was "B2," to increase accessibility through a remote video location. Fewer than 14% of those who responded opted to do nothing.

The Committee will meet in mid-October to study these results further and, based on them, formulate some recommendations for the Board of Directors.

± **Committee: Bruce Parsons; Jan Prochaska; Ben Soule; and Brad Greeley, Chair**

2006 Conference Calendar

Conferences (in chronological order)	Starting	Ending
Young Adults Conference	Friday, June 16	Tuesday, June 20
Conference on the Arts	Saturday, June 17	Saturday, June 24
ISHRA—June	Tuesday, June 20	Saturday, June 24
Natural History Conference	Saturday, June 24	Saturday, July 1
Young Religious Unitarian Universalists	Saturday, June 24	Saturday, July 1
All Star I	Saturday, July 1	Saturday, July 8
All Star II	Saturday, July 8	Saturday, July 15
Religious Education	Saturday, July 15	Saturday, July 22
International Affairs	Saturday, July 22	Saturday, July 29
Institute on Religion in an Age of Science	Saturday, July 29	Saturday, August 5
UCC I Family & Youth Conferences	Sunday, August 6	Saturday, August 12
UCC II Family & Youth Conferences	Saturday, August 12	Friday, August 18
Weekend Conference of the Laity	Friday, August 18	Sunday, August 20
Life on a Star Family Conference I	Sunday, August 20	Saturday, August 26
Life on a Star Family Conference II	Saturday, August 26	Saturday, September 2
Pelican Reunion	Saturday, September 2	Monday, September 4
Elderhostel I	Sunday, September 3	Friday, September 8
Midweek Retreat I	Monday, September 4	Friday, September 8
Granite State College	Tuesday, September 5	Friday, September 8
NH Society of Photographic Artists	Thursday, September 7	Sunday, September 10
ISHRA—September	Friday, September 8	Sunday, September 10
Elderhostel II	Sunday, September 10	Friday, September 15
Midweek Retreat II	Monday, September 11	Friday, September 15
Star Women	Full: Wednesday, September 13	Friday, September 15
	Midweek: Wednesday, Sept. 13	Sunday, September 17
	Weekend: Friday, September 15	Sunday, September 17
Dover Yoga Studio & Gallery	Friday, September 15	Sunday, September 17
Star Hampshire Traditional Music & Dance	Friday, September 15	Sunday, September 17

In addition to the above listed conferences, more events in September will be confirmed over the winter.

Please be sure to check the Web site, www.starisland.org, for the most current offerings. Once registration begins, a complete copy of the Blue Book with conference descriptions, rates, and more, in addition to a registration form and other pertinent materials, will be available there for download.

(Update on the Executive Director Search, continued from page 1)

Island frequently, especially in the first year or two of the job, in order to become familiar with each conference, get to know island staff, and begin to meet and greet our many wonderful conferees and volunteers. As you can see from the advertisement elsewhere in this issue, we also seek an interim Conference Center Director who will be responsible to the Executive Director for running the conference center operations of Star Island. Our new Executive Director will also be ably supported by our current full time and six-month staff.

The SIC Board would like to extend its thanks to the Search Committee for its thorough, expeditious and excellent work. They are: **Ron Cordes**, Search Committee Chair, SIC Board, ASII; **Greg Case**, Pelican Representative; **Lisa Heistercamp Davis**, LOAS; **Peter Dickerman**, UCC; **Lisa Duncanson**, President of Star Island United Church of Christ, SIC Board; **Karen Mathiasen**, IA and IRAS; **Scott Stewart**, ASI and Pel Reunion; and **Deborah Weiner Soule**, ASI, former SIC Board member.

We look forward to announcing the name of our new Executive Director and telling you all about her in the next newsletter.

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Council of Conferences Fall Meeting a Success

The fall meeting of the Star Island Council of Conferences was held October 15, 2005 at the North Church Parish Hall in Portsmouth, NH. After an introduction and report on the new corporate status of the council from acting President Tom Kennedy, Paul Jennings gave an overview of the summer and spoke about transportation plans for 2006. Brad Greeley presented the results of the chapel survey and Deborah Tomblason reported on the Annual Fund. Afternoon break out

sessions included: Responsibility Committee, Island policies, Best Practices for Conference Policies, and Fundraising on Star Island. The meeting concluded with reports from these sessions. The council voted in the following slate of officers:

Judy Crawford (LOAS1), Secretary
 Herb Emers (Arts, LOAS1), Vice President
 Tom Kennedy (LOAS1), President
 Karen Mathiasen, (Arts, IRAS), Vice President
 Jan Prochaska (AS1), Vice President

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Photo courtesy Sean D. Elliot.

Tom Kennedy, re-elected President of the Council of Conferences, at the Fall Meeting in October.

Chairs & Registrars, Save the Date!

The 2006 Winter Chairs & Registrars meeting will be held on Saturday, February 4th with a "rain date" of Saturday, February 11th. Location and details to follow... Be on the lookout for a letter in early January.

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Who's NED?

As those of you who have served as Registrars know, we launched a new online registration system in 2004 and a new database in 2005. Linda Anderle, Island Registrar, and all conference registrars are to be commended for their status as guinea pigs with these two new systems, and we want to assure everyone that we are hard at work behind the scenes working out the bugs and acting on the wonderful suggestions we've received from all of you. What you may not know is that the database, affectionately known as NED, which stands for **N**ice **E**asy **D**atabase, was customized for Star and is capable of holding and

reporting on all information needed by development, community relations, volunteer management, registration, and front desk billing. This integration allows staff to do their work without the need for double entry or working with systems that don't "talk" to each other.

After reviewing our needs, available databases, and potential costs, last year we decided upon NED as the most practical, easy to use, and cost-effective solution. Despite the growing pains of getting to know "him," we remain a fan of NED and think you will, too.

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Shoalers in the News

Annie Boutelle, Shoaler, author, and senior lecturer at Smith College, celebrated the publication of her book, *Becoming Bone: Poems on the Life of Celia Thaxter (1835-1894)*, with a reading of the poems and a reception at the Portsmouth Athenaeum on October 15.

Bruce Parson, former Pelican and Board member and long-time conferee and volunteer, exhibited photography from his book, *Star Light*, at the the Music Hall in Portsmouth through October.

Summer Work on Star

The 2006 conference season may seem far away, but the process of staffing the island for summer is already being prepared.

Applications for spring and summer employment as a "Pelican" on Star's beloved summer staff will be available in mid-December and accepted through mid-January (dates TBA). Materials may be requested through the office by email at office@starisland.org, by phone at (603) 430-6272, or downloaded from the Web site (www.starisland.org).

The minimum age requirement is generally 18 years; however, applications from younger potential Pelicans are also considered on a case-by-case basis.

Please look for the comprehensive application packet in mid-December for more information.

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Illustration courtesy Joyce Homan.

Passages

Births:

Samuel Austin Bieber, son of Nadia Kuczinski Bieber and John Bieber, July 28, 2004.

Marriages:

Jocelyn Pierce & Jordan Chatterton, September 10, 2005.

Deaths:

Sharon DelNegro passed away on July 22, 2005. She leaves husband Rocco DelNegro and children Kimberly Schroeder, Kalee DelNegro, Karen Frederick, and Rocco DelNegro, Jr.

E. Ann Duncanson passed away on October 11, 2005 after a long struggle with Parkinson's disease. Ann attended the UCC conferences with her family for many years. Her son Jim Duncanson and his family continue to attend yearly, and Ann's daughter-in-law, Lisa Duncanson, is the current President of the Star Island United Church of Christ organization. Ann is predeceased by her husband, James Duncanson, and is survived by her children James, Jr. of Worcester, Ma. and Ruth Ann of Seattle, Wa., and two grandchildren, Cassandra & Hannah Duncanson.

Call for Submissions

Newsletter

Passages: Please let us know of the births, marriages, and deaths in our Shoaler community so that we may use these pages to ensure that the rest of our extended "family" knows of such important life passages. Guidelines are posted on the website or available through the office.

Shoalers in the News: Please send us local or national news clippings or notice of other press coverage about your own or another Shoaler's noteworthy activities, to be summarized in these pages.

Pelican Perspectives: Times change, but so much also stays the same. "Pelican Perspectives," included periodically in the newsletter, compares the experiences of current and former Pels who worked on the same crew. Essays should be roughly 300 words. Please contact the office if you are interested or know someone who might be.

Photographs & Illustrations: We frequently feature Shoalers' artwork in the newsletter, on our Web site, and in other publications and promotional materials. We welcome and appreciate your contributions.

Fall poster & brochure: Conference leaders, please submit your 75 word write-up the first week of November. See publications guidelines (emailed in October) for details.

Blue Book: Conference leaders, please submit your 500 word conference description by Monday, November 14. See publications guidelines (emailed in October) for details.

For more information about these or any other Star Island publication, please contact Hilary Niles via email at hniles@starisland.org, phone at (603) 430-6272, or mail at 10 Vaughan Mall, Suite 8, Worth Plaza, Portsmouth, NH 03801.

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