

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



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

Photo by Irene Bush



From the President

I am watching the snow fall on the Piscataqua, looking at the white world surrounding me, but—as I write this to you—I am thinking about Star, next summer, and the experiences we will have from the moment we step on the boat to our first good view of the island. What will the summer of 2005 bring? It will bring many changes, some of which may feel to many like the movie *Back to the Future*. The more things change, the more some of the changes repeat what used to be. Yet, I believe that the changes you will see are moving us forward and, for the most part, in positive ways. Some have created financial stress, but others will result in economies and greater security about our current and future operations.

Remember last summer? We built a laundry so that all of our sheets and towels could be washed on island.

It seemed very novel to the Board to do this, and sensible too! Not only would the laundry relieve Pelicans of the time and effort of carrying 5,000 pounds of linens and towels on and off the Loughton, it would ensure that we always had what was needed on the island and it would save us money to boot! The Board thought we were approving something totally new...until Island Historian Ed Rutledge let us know that Star Island actually used to have a laundry of its own. It is only in the last few decades, in fact, that we paid to send linens off island to be washed.

You'll be reading from Paul that our boat service is changing and we will now bring conferences on and off the island in two shifts. Does this sound novel? Not to me and probably not to many of you. In years past,

FROM THE PRESIDENT, page 3

ISAUU Launches Clergy Grants Program

In November the Isles of Shoals Association UU introduced a new Clergy Grants program as a companion to their ongoing Conference Grants. Thomas Elliott's vision of the ways in which gatherings of Unitarian clergy and laymen would provide personal growth and inspiration, and promote the growing Unitarian movement, led him to charter the original Unitarian Summer Meetings Association in 1896. A century later the ISAUU still honors the spirit of our founder, and the Clergy Grants program is an outgrowth of his vision. Administered in partnership with the UU Ministers Association, the Clergy Grants Program will fund room and board expenses for clergy and their families at their conference of choice. During this first season, Clergy Grants are available to Parish Ministers who have not yet attended a Star Island Conference. Details and application forms are available at www.shoals.org or by mail to the ISAUU, P.O. Box 1409, Portsmouth NH 03802.±

From the Executive Director

Around the time you receive this newsletter, the 2005 Chairs and Registrars will be gathering with staff in Framingham, Massachusetts to prepare for the 2005 season. February marks a shift in focus from bringing closure to the past season to planning for the next. Pelicans are hired, volunteer weekends planned, contractors get final approvals for capital projects, new and old Shoalers begin registering for conferences, and conference leaders put finishing touches on their plans to bring to life once again the rich traditions of summer conferences.

Shoalers value timeless island traditions, but change—as we know—is an invariable facet of life. This year, change brings us a new ferry service. Conferees will now be traveling to and from Star aboard the Captain's Lady, a seventy-eight foot, 149 passenger vessel. The Captain's Lady is used primarily for off-shore whale watches and is well suited for the weather and sea conditions around the Shoals. Use of a vessel this size is actually the revival of a tradition from many years ago when two round trips were necessary to bring the conferences to the island. For many long-time Shoalers, this will be a taste of nostalgia but for others, this will become a “new” tradition. Captain's Fishing Charters, owner of the Captain's Lady, is based in Newburyport, Massachusetts but will operate from the dock immediately adjacent to our conference parking lot in Portsmouth. To see pictures of the boat, please log onto www.captainsfishing.com.

The change in ferry companies came about this fall when the Isles of Shoals Steamship Company (ISSCo), owner of the Thomas Lighton, notified us they would be unable to continue their contract with us in part because of the complications presented by Homeland Security. The change in boat companies will have little impact on most conferences, and we will do our best to make the transition as easy as possible. A long term agreement with Captain's Fishing Charters is being discussed this winter and by late summer, we will be able to apprise you of the nature of ferry services for the next several years. Your conference leaders will be sending much more detailed information to you in the spring regarding ferry schedules and daily boat service to and from the island.

The year ahead, and especially this spring, will be unusually busy as we make plans for the new boat service and undertake a challenging array of projects. As we prepare for the new year, we are working more closely than ever with conference leaders to insure that conferences are filled. In early January, I sent a letter to chairs and registrars reminding them of the work we must do together to avoid under-subscribed conferences. Every unfilled space is lost income for the year and a lost opportunity to build strong conferences for the future. Every unfilled space also makes it more difficult to undertake necessary capital projects and keep room and board rate increases to a minimum. For this reason, I ask that we all make it our business to promote our conferences and ensure that each week, 260 conferees will share the joys of a stay on the island. Meeting our five-year budget and island improvement objectives is largely dependent on achieving close-to-full utilization of the island.

As we look to the next five years and beyond, it is clear that the Corporation must be an evolving entity ready to meet new demands. We have faced and met considerable challenges over the past several years. However, the successful work of the past will be diminished if we do not now engage in proactive, strategic planning to respond to the island's deteriorating infrastructure and to prepare for a future complicated by forces increasingly beyond our control.

The critical need at present is to focus on the requirements of our facility without losing forward momentum on improving Corporation and conference center operations. For this reason, the Board approved a revised staffing plan which will primarily add depth to our facilities and maintenance staff and enable me to attend to long-range needs. To do so, we will hire a Director of Island Planning and Operations who, in addition to serving as the key facilities planner, will serve as the island manager and chief operating officer of the Corporation. This will enable me to focus time and energy on issues such as ten-year financial and capital planning, long-term ferry and parking arrangements, lease negotiations with Shoals Marine Lab, the acquisition of a shore-side facility, and to



Captain's Lady, Captain's Fishing Charters

From the President—*continued from page 1*

when smaller boats were used, conferees were scheduled for as many as three boats before the entire conference was assembled. While we will miss the ease of making one trip in the Thomas Laighton and are sad to see our historical relationship with the Isles of Shoals Steamship Company and the Whitaker family come to an end, the complications of Homeland Security and ISSCo's need to revisit its business plan impel us to make this change. Our new service is with an excellent company and we hope to work with them on a longer term contract once we test out the logistics at the beginning of summer 2005.

While laundry and boat service may cause us to reminisce about recreating what used to be in a new, modern form, there are other changes that are totally new, required by outside forces like fire marshals and the changing priorities of vendors like ISSCo. As you walk up the path, the hotel will look different to you. A new fire tower will extend from the left side of Gosport and the porch will stretch out a little longer in front of it. There will be another tower on the back of Gosport, invisible until you walk behind the hotel. Aesthetically, we have tried to minimize the impact of this change, but there was little choice about the construction of the towers. Without them we would not be allowed to use Gosport, and those rooms are needed to accommodate full conferences.

Another, less visible change is the planned installation of a water treatment (reverse osmosis)

system which will provide drinking water. Without the Laighton's water deliveries, this became necessary too. In addition to these planned new capital projects, work will continue to maintain the capital we already have. Staff and Board are working hard to figure out how to accomplish all that needs to be done and how to pay for it.

Changes and challenges will always be with us. In the midst of the re-organization we are undergoing, the Board and the entire full time staff met together for the first time for an end-of-January Retreat, facilitated by long-time Shoalers Jan and Jim Prochaska, so that we can together manage change—those that are occurring and those that need to occur. Our goal is to understand from all points of view what Star requires—the many imperatives to keep our facility viable and to make the best conference season possible for all of us. We must figure out how to use our somewhat scarce resources without overburdening and burning out those who contribute so much to Star being the special place that it is. The retreat was an essential and inspirational step in creating the kind of partnership necessary in this time of change. As a small non-profit, we will probably never have quite enough money, quite enough staff or quite enough volunteers to accomplish all that Star needs, but I hope you agree with me that we are being thoughtful and prudent in our planning for change and in our deployment of our resources. I want to thank the Board, the staff, the Pelicans, and all of you for all we collectively contribute in time, effort, and money to the Star enterprise. Everyone's contributions are essential. May we all keep up the good work.

± Irene Bush

In Brief

Volunteer Work Weekends on Star Island: Star Island is gearing up for a series of spring volunteer work weekends beginning in early May and running through early June. If you are interested in volunteering, please let us know by e-mail to jwatts@starisland.org, or by mail to 10 Vaughan Mall, Suite 8, Portsmouth, NH 03801. Please include your name, complete contact information, and the ways in which you would like to volunteer (i.e. spring work weekends, helping in the office, other). ±

From the Director of Development & Community Relations

As we prepare for all the changes ahead of us and focus our energies and resources on Star's facilities needs, including painting and re-roofing the chapel, I'm reminded of the children's hand game used in recent UCC advertising to illustrate inclusiveness:

**"Here is the church and here is the steeple,
open it up and see all the people."**

From a sermon given recently at Washington National Cathedral comes this story about a religious educator of preschool children. "Just as class was about to begin, the principal came to the door to tell her that a new little girl would be joining her class, and this little girl had just one arm. The teacher wished she had time to prepare the children so that they would not embarrass their new classmate, but welcomed her warmly and began the lesson. As class was ending, she led the kids in that game: "here's the church, here's ..." And then it dawned on her that she had done the very thing she was afraid one of the kids would do to the new girl, and put her in an impossible situation. When she looked up, though, what she saw was a little boy from the next row go over to the little girl, and he gave her his right hand, and together they made the church and the steeple and the people."

As I look at our annual list of all the people who make Star Island a possibility for their families, friends, fellow conferees, and even those they don't know and may never meet, I think that little boy must be a future Shoaler. Just like those fingers wagging together at the end of the child's game, it takes "all the people" to keep Star alive.

The people on this list make a heartfelt choice to support Star with their financial resources and labor. As well, they honor each other and give memory to those who have gone on. In turn, we pay tribute to each and everyone one of you.

± Deborah Lielasus Tombleson

2004 Annual Fund - Thank You!

<i>Arts</i>	\$ 11,178
<i>All Star 1</i>	\$ 88,283
<i>All Star 2</i>	\$ 37,675
<i>Elderhostel</i>	\$ 696
<i>Friends of Star</i>	\$ 53,601
<i>International Affairs</i>	\$ 27,517
<i>Institute of Religion in an Age of Science</i>	\$ 11,164
<i>Isles of Shoals Historic Research Association</i>	\$ 1,105
<i>Weekend Conference of the Laity</i>	\$ 4,111
<i>Life on a Star 1</i>	\$ 102,398
<i>Life on a Star 2</i>	\$ 52,567
<i>Liberal Religious Adults</i>	\$ 3,570
<i>Midweek Retreat</i>	\$ 2,553
<i>Natural History Conference</i>	\$ 13,172
<i>Pelican Reunion</i>	\$ 21,165
<i>Religious Education</i>	\$ 23,555
<i>September Events</i>	\$ 470
<i>Staff (Current and Former)</i>	\$ 5,547
<i>United Church of Christ 1</i>	\$ 6,464
<i>United Church of Christ 2</i>	\$ 9,738
<i>Star Women</i>	\$ 3,026
<i>Young Adult Conference</i>	\$ 1,029
<i>Young Religious Unitarian Universalists</i>	\$ 342
	\$ 480,926
<i>2004 bequests and gifts to Permanent Trust</i>	\$ 67,878
<i>2004 bequests received in early 2005</i>	\$ 876,667



Shoalers gather for sunset by Sean D. Elliott

From the Executive Director — *continued from page 2*

assume a more active role with Deborah Tombleson in our fund development and community relations efforts.

The staff reorganization should be completed by early March. To date, we have filled three year-round positions. Ben Fowler, long-time seasonal staff member, is now in the year-round role of Chief Engineer. In addition to experience accrued over his many seasons on Star, Ben recently graduated with a mechanical engineering degree from UNH. Sumar Maji, another long-time seasonal staff member, has moved into the year-round role of Chief Operator of the Water and Wastewater Treatment Facilities and will be responsible for both drinking water production and wastewater treatment. Sumar is a NH Department of Environmental Services licensed treatment plant operator. We are also pleased to welcome Hilary Niles as our Portsmouth Office Assistant. Hilary, who graduated from UNH and the Salt Institute for Documentary Studies, also serves as volunteer Program Director for Portsmouth Community Radio and brings strong communication and organization skills to her new role. We are in the process of screening forty eight applications for the Director of Island Planning and Operations position and expect to make an offer of employment by the end of February. A reorganization such as this, while creating opportunities for some

staff, displaces others. Joe Watts is now Assistant to the Executive Director, Kate Brady has become our Development and Community Relations Associate, and Kristi Vazifdar is now Finance Manager. Regrettably, in the restructured office, positions were not available for Charleen Imhoff and Dave Reynolds, both of whom left the Corporation at the end of the year. Charleen was key in enabling us to establish an efficient year-round office in Portsmouth. Dave made extraordinary contributions to improving safety on the island for staff and guests alike and helped galvanize an aggressive approach to maintaining our facilities. His creativity and foresight helped to shape our views in such important areas as marine transportation needs and the imperative of a shore-side facility. I am deeply indebted to both Charleen and Dave for their dedication to the Corporation and its vision, and for the role each played in the progress we have made.

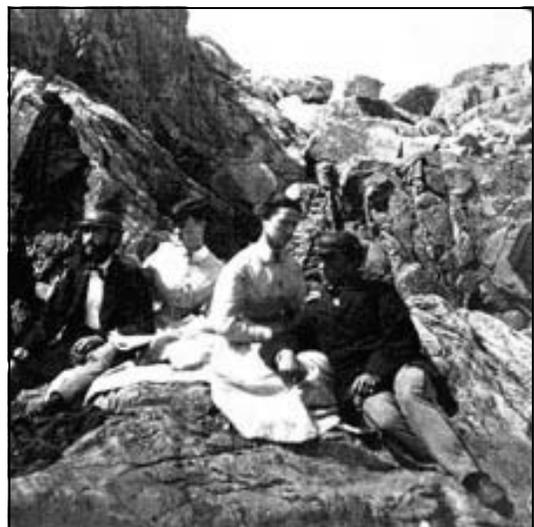
And so we begin a new season of tradition and change. I look forward to the challenges that lie ahead in 2005 and to working with the SIC Board, staff, and our hundreds of dedicated donors and volunteers whose collective spirit and generosity makes all of this possible.

± Paul Jennings

Memorial Day Trips

We have tentative plans to offer day trips to Star Island on some or all of the Memorial Day weekend days: May 28, 29, and 30. Trips to and from the Island aboard the 113 passenger vessel *Nautilus*, will originate from Hampton, New Hampshire. We expect the boat to leave Hampton in the late morning and return to by mid to late afternoon. This is an opportunity to visit Star at a less busy time and to introduce Star to the Seacoast Community and potential future Shoalers. As in previous years, all buildings will be closed except the Chapel and those with designated restrooms. We will have more information later in the winter and post it on our website but in the meantime, if you are interested and would like more information, please call our office at 603.430.6272 or email us at office@starisland.org.

Isles of Shoals, 1852



Passages

Births:

Francis Jane Thayer, daughter of Robbie Thayer and Suzanne Frechette, November 20, 2004.

Wolfgang Shaheen Anderson, son of Scott Anderson and Jeila Gueramian, January 20, 2005.

Marriages:

Robbie Thayer and Suzanne Frechette, July 19, 2003.

Nola Riedel and Torrance Kopfer, May 8, 2004.

Nancy Miller and Stan Bonis, July 31, 2004.

John David Wood and Megan Brennan, October 23, 2004.

Deaths:

Elmer H. Allen died on October 30, 2004. He was 91. Elmer first came to Star Island in 1965 when he attended the Weekend Conference of the Laity. He and his wife Peg later attended Midweek Retreat for several years in the early 1990s. An active volunteer in many regional and national organizations, Elmer also volunteered on Star Island where the beauty of the Shoals left quite an impression on him. Predeceased by his wife, Elmer is survived by two sons, a daughter, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Marvin Braiterman died on October 21, 2004. He was 79. Marvin first attended the International Affairs Conference as a speaker in 1972. Marvin returned the following summer with his family and continued to attend regularly, often serving as a moderator and panelist, until his illness in 1994. He will be remembered as a distinguished World War II veteran, having earned six battle stars; a consummate defender of civil rights and other civil liberties; and as a national leader in Reform Judaism. Dr. Braiterman is survived by his wife of 57 years Thea Braiterman, his children, five grandchildren, a brother, a sister, and many nieces and nephews.

Bob Tuttle died on November 26, 2004. He was 82. Bob was well known for his love of the Isles of

Shoals and its history, lore, and legend. He was a frequent visitor to both Star and Appledore and was well-loved by all on the islands and in the NH seacoast community. Bob was the first coordinator of the September Elderhostel Programs on Star Island that began 18 years ago. After organizing and managing the first program, he turned the reigns over to Ken and Joan Cummiskey. Bob then continued as an Instructor in the Elderhostel program, teaching his last class in September 2004. Bob's course on the history of the Isles of Shoals was a favorite of the Elderhostel program, and Bob often spoke at many other Star Island conferences and to students at Shoals Marine Lab on Appledore. Among his other duties during Elderhostel, Bob took the groups over to Appledore every September to view Celia's Garden, tour the Shoals Marine Lab, and visit the many pathways and coves of Appledore. Bob was predeceased by Dot, his wife of 58 years.

Please send information about births, marriages, and/or deaths in the Star Island family to the attention of the Editor: *Star Island Newsletter*, 10 Vaughan Mall, Suite 8, Portsmouth, NH 03801, or e-mail it to kbrady@starisland.org.



Still Life Standing by Alexandra de Steiguer

Shoalers in the News

Mike Kang's film *The Motel* is making its World Premiere in the American Spectrum category at the Sundance Film Festival. Check it out at www.themotel-film.com. Mike was a Pelican in the early '90s.

Nathaniel Hawthorne remains one of New England's favorite sons. More than a century after his death Nathaniel Hawthorne is among America's best known and most read authors. Born in Salem, Mass. on July 4th, 1804 and schooled in Maine, he developed a love and passion for writing. But in September of 1852 the author of *The Scarlet Letter* and *House of Seven Gables* was a tourist on the Isles of Shoals. Hawthorne recorded his initial impressions in his notebooks, published after his death by his wife Sophia. The largest portion of his 1852 journal is devoted to

time spent on the Isles of Shoals. That entire section, about 10,000 words can be found at www.seacoastnh.com. Included are several entries about Star Island:

"On the highest point of Star Island stands the church,--a small, wooden structure; and, sitting in its shadow, I found a red-baize-shirted fisherman, who seemed quite willing to converse...The school-house stood but a little way from the meeting-house, and near it was the minister's dwelling; and by and by I had a glimpse of the good man himself, in his suit of black, which looked in very decent condition at the distance from which I viewed it. His clerical air was quite distinguishable, and it was rather curious to see it, when everybody else wore red-baize shirts and fishing-boots, and looked of the scaly genus...I intend to revisit the island with Mr. Thaxter, and see more of its peculiarities and inhabitants."

± Craig Brown/seacoastNH.com

Winter Keeper Perspectives

"The Isles of Shoals are just a few marks on a mariner's chart. There is not much here, and what there is becomes smaller in the presence of the sea. The wind is the shaping force that leaves its trace upon the old buildings, twisted shrubs and long grasses standing bare against the sky.

This is my eighth long winter on the Isles of Shoals as caretaker, so naturally I've explored every part of the islands that I can get to. It's here that I've witnessed the towering waves of the Nor'easter, and the rare calm sea stretching silver and endless into the distance.

Sometimes I'm asked - "don't you get bored?" or "haven't you seen everything by now?" Strangely, the answer is no.

Wandering through the shifting light that paints the features of this place, I see that each new moment presents its subtle differences, and I have come to realize that the sights never truly end, that being open to what is really here always reveals more than the expected. These nine small islands offer a valuable lesson; that the ability to see and to experience is limited only by what I think I know of a place - by my expectations.

I live among the islands with one other

person, but much of the time I am the only one here. Often I climb the high rocky bluffs to stand gazing at the horizon. Even within the great space and silence the wind seems to echo, and I can feel the isolation of this place.

Most of us aren't often by ourselves for long periods with nothing but the wild elements for company. In a way, solitude is like being restricted to one small island - yourself. You've walked that personal island all your life; you take it for granted that you know every part of it. But solitude forces you to stay there, to walk it again with new eyes... to come to the very edge and gaze into the unknown.

I've learned that islands - whether bounded by oceans or by my own self-perceptions - are only as limited as I believe them to be. And so I will explore these islands again... and hopefully, I will continue to see."

± Alexandra de Steiguer

Alex's photographs can be found on exhibit this year at the Gallery Kayafas in Boston, Artstream Gallery in Rochester, NH, and The DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park in Lincoln, MA. To view anytime, visit her website at www.alexdesteiguer.com.

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