

# Star Island

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## The Happiness Quotient

by Angela Matthews, Development Director

This is my fifth summer on Star. I know – a mere infant in Star life – but nonetheless an interesting vantage point from which to experience this precious 40 acres. Every week is a self-contained whole that gives us a quite complete variety of personae – intellectual, fun-loving, music-in-every-moment, traditional – the list of qualities is as endless as the number of conferences. Each family arrives and seems to live out a year in a week. It is fascinating as much as it is invigorating. I am blessed to be present with each and every group.

For me, the satisfaction measure of each week is the HQ or happiness quotient. What are Shoalers saying? How are you experiencing the island? What's the overall satisfaction level? I listened to learn what was meaningful to you in 2013 and heard best Pel show ever, appreciation for thoughtful attention to food sensitivities, the island has never looked better. Some other comments from the summer of 2013 include:

*"You asked me in your thank you note last year why, as a new Shoaler, I chose to give so*

*continued on inside*

## On Island: A Lot to be Happy About

by Sharon Kennedy, Board President

Greetings, fellow Shoalers! As I write my first report to you as President of the Board, I feel such a sense of gratitude. I am writing from the island, where the Life on A Star conferences have had two glorious weeks. LOAS has broken its attendance records, and is full of joy, music and fellowship, including the return of many Shoalers who haven't come in several years. Everyone is so happy to be here, and happy about the new showers, great food, new porch, the staff, the Green Gosport Initiative, and so much more. I hear this positive spirit has been true all season. More people are inquiring about joining the McGill Society, for example, to provide for Star in their estate plans, and about becoming Corporation members. We must continue to build our future leaders, by encouraging the next generation to get involved as island citizens, not just conferees. I am grateful to be working with Joe Watts and his wonderful management team, and that Star Island is in such good condi

*continued on inside*

### A Giving Community

*Hi Shoalers! Giving is such a powerful part of island citizenship. Our fall newsletter shows how our community of giving continues to make Star Island a meaningful place. We thank you for all you do to support us.*

**- Joe Watts, CEO**

# CHAIRitable Giving

by Rev. Dave Scheuneman, Residential Life Advisor & Island Chaplain

As a conferee since my childhood in the 1970's, with twenty stints as minister-of-the-week and eight seasons as a conference chair, I thought I mostly knew how Star Island runs. Working here for the past two summers, however, I have been amazed at how much I still had to learn. For example, I have long known about the tremendous spirit of generosity that goes into sustaining our traditions. All year round, people contribute an abundance of "time, talent and treasure". Most of our regulars know about the importance of financial giving to our Annual Fund and the McGill Society. Anyone who has helped plan or run a conference event knows something of how much time and talent people give to our community. But I was surprised to discover the depth to which volunteerism goes into all the other aspects of keeping Star going.

For an idea of the impact that Star Island's volunteers have, just consider the chairs. If you have ever sat down on Star Island, you have personally been supported by a volunteer's handiwork. There is a whole team of volunteers dedicated just to maintaining wicker. They spend days patiently making repairs and weaving new seats. (Can you imagine Star without our front porch rockers?) Or think of the 350 dining hall chairs, every one of which was carefully cleaned by volunteers one weekend. Numerous other volunteers, coming and going all summer, worked at refinishing the dining chairs one-by-one. Then there are hundreds of other chairs spread out in hotel rooms and staff quarters – cleaned mostly by volunteers every spring during open-up. So, if that many volunteers go into sustaining just one facet of Star Island's charm, imagine how much generosity goes into maintaining Star as a whole!

The way I see it, Star Island is a gift that we give each other. Every year, I see how Star Island can bring out the best in people. And people, when they are at their best, naturally want to play a part in sustaining Star as the inspirational and transformative place it has been. Ultimately, though, the best gift we can give each other is to continue visiting and spending time together here – because that is the primary ingredient that makes Star Island what it is. ✨

***If you have ever sat down on Star Island, you have personally been supported by a volunteer's handiwork.***

## The McGill Society

The Fred and Ginny McGill Society honors those who, like the McGills, have shown a commitment to the preservation of Star Island by including the non-profit Star Island Corporation in their estate plans. Contact Angela Matthews for more information - [amatthews@starisland.org](mailto:amatthews@starisland.org) or 603.430.6272.



stu mosseau photo

# Bedded Bliss

With 274 guest mattresses on island, Star works tirelessly to make sure visitors get to rest comfortably when tired. Conference Center Director Justina Maji explains the maintenance process:

*Our crew goes around the island physically and visually inspecting each mattress. Mattresses are rated from 1 (absolutely needs replacement) to 5 (excellent and beautiful).*

*Working within our budget, we replace all mattresses rated 1, usually all of the 2's, and possibly some of the 3's.*

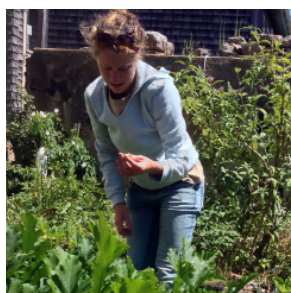
*While lying on each bed on island can be fun, staff enjoy riding the new mattresses out to the island during an early spring boat run more. ⚡*

# Garden Growth

A labor of love for summer staff, Star Island's gardens create a bounty of produce. At the end of August over 300 lbs have already been harvested for staff and guest meals. Sustainability Pelican Rachel Worthington says her goal is to harvest nearly 700 lbs by the end of island close-up. ⚡

Environmental Services Manager Kristen Simard tends to one of three gardens on Star Island.

.....➡



Zucchini harvested for bread from the Elliott Memorial Building garden.

⬅.....



Leon Dunkley, Minister of the Week for Life on a Star 1 & 2 leads a service outside the chapel.

.....➡



bob levine photo

## On Island Continued

tion at this point, financially, physically and spiritually.

The future is also bright, and full of exciting plans and hopes. Because of all that good feeling, people are giving more financial and volunteer support, which will enable us to make even more improvements to our beloved but aged facilities, as well as to keep our rates as affordable as possible. The plans for alternative energy sources are going forward quickly, and we will be moving away from burning diesel fuel, which is one of our strategic goals. We will also be making lots of energy efficiency improvements, reducing our overall energy needs and dependencies. Our relationships with various regulatory bodies remains positive and cooperative. The staff is already planning the conference schedule for next year, with some exciting new developments.

The Star Island Regatta, now on for September 28, has grown in participation since we revived it, and promises to be great fun - come back for it! I also hope to see many of you at Starry Night on November 16 in our Portsmouth office, or at a Star event in your home, town or church - we need to keep spreading the good word about Star, until all our conferences, and beds, are full. Most of all, I am grateful to you, dear friends, for your questioning and thoughtful, but always unflagging support of our beloved spirits' home. Thank You!

In Star Spirit,

**Sharon Kennedy, President**



## Happiness Quotient Continued

*much. It's because Star gave me so much last year. I'm back because I found a community where I belong – a community I love."*

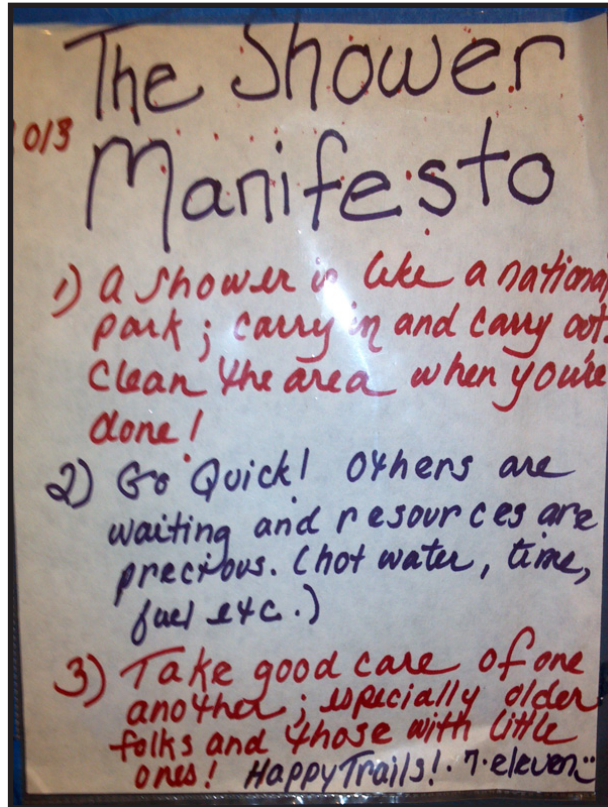
*"The changes to Cottage A made it possible for our family to bring my father back to Star. Accessibility has made all the difference to him and to us."*

*"Oh thank you thank you so much. I have longed for this for years and now so much on the accessibility wish-list is complete. How wonderful!"*

*"The plan to make Star Island energy independent and sustainable through renewable solar power is the most exciting breakthrough in years. Now, when I give I do so knowing that where we are headed serves an even larger purpose than our conferences, ourselves, and our day guests."*

Speaking of sustainability, Shoalers of all

ages want to help. Upon earning a whole \$16 at her lemonade stand this summer, this Shoaler explained to her aunt that she would give \$1 to Star Island and save the rest for college. The perfect split of resources for a community minded six-year-old.



Angela Matthews photo

Of course, the showers were the talk of the town this season. Those who loved them emphatically said so. And then there were a few who longed for the old days of towel-wrapped guests of all ages sharing stories while waiting for their turn on a shower line that moved quickly as one jumped out to dress and another jumped in. As one conferee put it, "With all these improvements I'm running out of material for talent show skits!" And speaking of showers, one day a "Shower Manifesto" appeared on the door of the women's shower room.

## Bringing a Sustainable Light

Created in 2009 by the Star Island Board of Directors, the **Bringer of Light** Award recognizes those Shoalers who have made a significantly long and noticeable impact on the greater Star Island community. At the 2013 Annual Meeting, Bruce Parsons and Dick Case were presented with the award to celebrate their hard work and volunteer efforts supporting Star Island's solar energy project. ⚡



Bruce Parsons (left) receives a handshake from former Board President Russ Peterson.

Dick Case (right) is presented with one of the engraved lanterns by former Board President Russ Peterson.



sean d. elliot photos

Here it is in all its naked beauty. Where did it come from? Well, we'll never know who, but it clearly came from the core values of this island from its very founding moments. Resources are precious. Take care of one another. Carry in – carry out. Doesn't that just speak to who we are?

These comments and so many more during the 2013 season indicated a very high HQ. I like to think of this in part as the result of a promise fulfilled. We started a journey in 2007 that is still unfolding up to and including the post-campaign grant this year of \$100,000 from the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock to install sprinklers in the chapel and replace the fire pump. Make no mistake, 2007 was not the worst of times in the life of this island. That summer gave us all the opportunity to join that unbroken chain of Star Stewards established by Thomas and Lilla Elliott in 1897 with the very first conference on Star. We are in good company and we are grateful to be part of such a vibrant and sustaining community of generous Shoalers. It probably won't be the last time the Star community will face a daunting challenge. It is a reminder that anything and everything is possible. It just takes a small group of determined individuals who won't stop until the task is complete. Were it not for you all, would this island have survived? ⚡

*bob levine photo*



## Passages

All Star 1 attendees **Kemp Harris** and **Bill Tibbs** married on October 6, 2012.

**Owen James Merrill**, fourth generation Shoaler and great-nephew of Carolyn Kerr, was born on June 8, 2012.

**Bethany Julie Emmons** was born June 28, 2012 to Life on a Star 1 attendees Jessica and Will Emmons.

**Tripp Duncan Laffin** was born on August 15, 2012 to Star Gathering attendee Jasmine Duval Laffin and Timothy Laffin.

**Phyllis Carlson** passed away on January 12, 2013. Phyllis most recently attended Star Arts.

**Omar Stephane Elorch** was born on March 18, 2013 to former Pelican Mandy Ellenwood and her husband Omar Elorch.

Former Life on a Star 1 attendee **David Riedel** married Luna Li on March 30, 2013 in Zhong Zhou, China.

**Annabelle June Falla** and **Isaac William Falla** were born on April 6, 2013 to former Pelican Dave Falla and his wife Dionne.

**Hero Iona Williams Eddy** was born on May 2, 2013 to International Affairs attendees and former Pelicans Lucia Green-Weiskel and Isaac Eddy.

**Lillian Katherine Bender** was born on May 5, 2013 to International Affairs attendees Katie and Marc Bender.

Former Pelican **Accacia Flanagan** married Grigg Mullen

on May 18, 2013.

**Grant Whitmore Lord-Steppe** was born May 20, 2013 to International Affairs attendees Katharine Lord and Daniel Steppe.

Former Pelican **Chris Wilson** married Laurel Valchuis on June 1, 2013.

**Jean Zeaman** passed away on June 14, 2013. Jean most recently attended the Laity Family Weekend.

**Phelan Brady** married Jennifer Doyle on June 16, 2013 in the Star Island Chapel. Phelan spent time on Star Island as a child during the Institute on Religion in an Age of Science Conference.

**Marge Millett** passed away on July 21, 2013. Marge was very active with the Gift Shop.



# Bakin' Bits

Our non-profit mission says nothing about offering heart warming baked goods at the end of dinner, but our bakers make us proud with treats that give us reason to jog around the island.



Orange cupcakes  
with raspberry-orange  
frosting



French bread



Chocolate cupcakes  
with whiskey frosting

*Visit Star Island in 2014 to indulge in treats from the Star Island bakery*

