

**Star Island Corporation (SIC)  
Chief Executive Officer's Report  
March 31, 2023**

***Our Mission:*** *To own and maintain Star Island and such other property as the Corporation may hold or acquire, as a center for religious, educational, and kindred purposes consistent with the principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association and the United Church of Christ.*

***Our Vision:*** *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.*

***Our Strategic Resolution:*** *Our [Strategic Resolution](#) has three main goals – Community, Public Health, and Environment. These goals are incorporated into this report, which follows the format of our most recent [Strategic Plan](#).*

## COMMUNITY

- We are excited about the upcoming season, including moving to the “new normal.” Star did a great job of getting through the pandemic (which we recognize is ongoing), and now we are focusing our efforts on moving forward, together. I am really excited about our 2023 theme of Kindness, which we are in the process of rolling out in a number of ways.
- The [2023 Personnel Handbook](#) has been published to our employment paperwork portal.
- The Health Committee met on March 16 to discuss various topics, including our [2023 medical \(including COVID-19\) policies](#) and day visitor policies.
- We have a great staff! Chelsea Haskell, our new year-round/FT Communications and Program Coordinator, starts on Monday. We are also pleased to welcome/welcome back the following professional seasonal staff members: Nick Bresinsky (Head Painter); Michele Carriero (Assistant Conference Center Director); Josselyn Donahue (PT First Aid Station Coordinator); Dilly Etter (Food Service Coordinator); Seth House (Executive Chef); Candi Kane (Logistics Manager); Don Kirlis (Island Engineer); Dan Linskey (Head Carpenter); Sabine Michaud (Assistant Island Engineer/Administrator). We are still on the lookout for an PT Island Nurse/FAS Coordinator for the season (in addition to Josselyn).
- We had 173 applications for Pelican positions this year, compared to 152 last year – a 14% increase! We are excited about our strong group of Pelicans, including a good number of returning supervisors. Offers went out on March 24, and we are in the process of filling a few remaining openings. We are also focusing on end-of-season recruitment/hiring – we have already hired 6 EOS workers.
- The Unitarian Universalist Alliance of Camps and Conference Centers (UUACCC) met on March 8 and will meet again on May 8. We hope to convene for an in-person retreat this fall.
- Our next meeting with 2023 conference leaders will take place on May 10.

## ECONOMIC

- As of March 15, we received 2,043 registrations representing 12,423 bed nights (64% of our 2023 budgeted goal of 19,406 bed nights) – please see attached bed night report for more information. Here’s how this compares to last year at this time, as well as the two years prior to

the pandemic when final enrollments were over 20K (2018) and 21K (2019) bed nights – please note that these 2018 and 2019 numbers are adjusted to removed waitlisted folks from AS 1):

- 2022: 2,302 registrations representing 14,189 bed nights
- 2019: 2,105 registrations representing 12,830 bed nights (2,165/13,250 w/ AS 1)
- 2018: 1,866 registrations representing 11,512 bed nights (1,901/11,757 w/AS 1)
- Some conferences are at or rapidly approaching capacity, including Star Arts and IRAS. Others are uncharacteristically lower than usual at this time, especially All Star 1 and LOAS 2. We are collaborating with representatives from these conferences on marketing and outreach.
- As part of our Beloved Community Project, we recently launched our [conference rates calculator](#), a new financial accessibility tool for individuals and families to understand all of the costs associated with attending a conference on Star Island. Additionally, we have been transparent about why our rates increased this year, and we have actively promoted our robust financial aid program. More information about [pricing and financial aid](#) can be found on our website.
- Berry Dunn presented the draft 2022 audit to the Audit Subcommittee of the Finance Committee on March 23 – please find the draft audit, two letters (required and advisory), and Berry Dunn’s executive summary attached. We are pleased that Berry Dunn is presenting an unmodified/clean opinion, that they did not detect any weaknesses in our internal controls, and that they did not make any significant audit adjustments. The Audit Subcommittee and Finance Committee recommend that the Board accept the 2022 audit as presented, and Audit Subcommittee Chair Bill Peterson will be joining Berry Dunn to present the 2022 Audit to the Board at its April 4 meeting.
- Additionally, Star Island Corporation’s 2022 Form 990 draft, and the Permanent Trust’s 2022 Form 990 draft, have also been prepared by Berry Dunn, and the drafts have been disseminated to their respective governing bodies for review. We anticipate finalizing the 990 drafts well in advance of the May 15 filing deadline.
- Our (draft) 2022 audited change in net assets (net income) was \$313,778 (vs. budget of \$340,020), which is another great result for SIC (especially given the ongoing uncertainty of the pandemic).
- Our January/February Financials indicate a projected net income of \$65,488 (vs. 2023 Budget of \$64,111). Please see the attached financials for more information.
- The Finance Committee met twice this month to discuss various topics, including the audit and SIC’s 990.
- The Trustees of the Star Island Permanent Trust Fund will be meeting on May 17.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

- We are gearing up for open-up, with a small crew of workers heading out for a few days next week, and then moving out to the island for the season on April 10, when our winter caretakers are scheduled to move off island.
- There are many projects on tap for this season, including planning and commencing work on the Underworld project, redoing the boardwalk along Cottages A, B, and C, installing a new fire panel, refurbishing/weatherproofing Cottage E and Manager’s Cottage, and much more. Please see the 2023 Capital Budget for more projects.
- We received word today that the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has formally awarded the Isles of Shoals Breakwaters Repair Contract to Luciano’s Excavation LLC. USACE’s next

step is to review their bonds/insurance/etc. and then provide them with an official Notice to Proceed. We have brought these contractors to the Shoals three times over the last few weeks, and we have begun to flesh out what this will look like on Star and at the Shoals this open-up, throughout our operating season, and into the fall and possibly winter. We have our attorney on standby to draft up our own contract with Luciano's, which will address myriad topics, including projects on Star, room and board, marine transportation, and more. We are planning on finalizing most details next month, and the anticipated project start time is late April/early May. We should know a lot more in a couple of weeks, and I am planning on presenting on this at the SIC Annual Meeting on April 29.

- We continue to meet regularly with the Isles of Shoals Steamship Company, Granite State Whale Watch, and Jack Farrell about numerous topics, including scheduling, day visitor and carry-on luggage policies, and longer-term planning. We have posted the [2023 All Boats Schedule](#).
- At its April 4 meeting, the board will be discussing and voting upon two recommendations from the Strategic Facilities Planning Committee – the updated Property Standards and the formation of a Landscape Task Force.
- We continue to collaborate with the NH Department of Environmental Services, Underwood Engineers, and Carollo Engineers on our Water Reclamation Pilot Program. We met again on March 9 to further refine plans for 2023 operating season.
- We are looking forward to our annual planning meeting with the Rye Fire Department, which will take place on Tuesday. We also had a great meeting with RFD on February 10 in connection with the Underworld project – they are very supportive of the direction we are headed with the project.

### STEWARDSHIP

- We are off to a good start to our 2023 Annual Fund campaign – as of March 31, we had realized \$118,742 in gifts, with a pledge balance of \$10,750, for a total of \$129,492 (18% of our 2023 goal of \$715,000), with 204 Sustaining Star (recurring) donors. Please see the attached March Annual Fund Comparison Report for more information. The following chart compares our progress this year to the previous four years:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Realized Gifts</i>	<i>Pledge Balance</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>% to Goal</i>	<i>Total Donors</i>
<b>2023</b>	\$118,742	\$10,750	\$129,492	18%	286
<b>2022</b>	\$60,889	\$22,725	\$83,614	12%	280
<b>2021</b>	\$93,883	\$26,125	\$120,008	20%	329
<b>2020</b>	\$59,728	\$12,125	\$71,853	9%	263
<b>2019</b>	\$62,038	\$11,250	\$73,288	14%	240

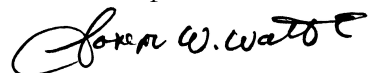
Five years of data are being included here to demonstrate how we are faring now vs. our last pre-pandemic season (2019).

- We are working on the Star Island Newsletter, with a goal of sending it out in early May.
- Our Spring Annual Fund appeal letter, the first major fundraising solicitation of the year, is expected to land in mailboxes by mid-May.

- We have requested a \$5,000 grant from the Bank of New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, in support of our fire detection system/fire panel project. We anticipate receiving our \$25,000 grant from the McIninch Foundation, which will be used for our cottages' boardwalk project, in the coming weeks.
- Our [2022 Donor Recognition Newsletter](#) was sent out to everyone in our database (a much wider distribution than in recent years) on March 17.
- The Fund Development Committee met on March 1. At this meeting, there was a “meet and greet” (as this was Laurie Contrino’s first meeting since she was hired as our Development Manager), and various topics were discussed including the how to increase Annual Fund participation both in terms of total dollars and numbers of donors. The committee meets again on Wednesday.
- Work on our Governance Review continues – the Governance Task Force, chaired by Tom Kennedy, met yesterday and is planning a breakout session for the Annual Meeting. The Best Practices Subgroup is in the process of interviewing leaders from other organizations; the Committees & Constituent Organizations Subgroup is gathering survey responses from committee chairs and committee members; the Membership Subgroup has drafted recommendations for bylaws changes pertaining to membership and is in the process of looking at other documents where membership is described; and the Bylaws Subgroup has been gathering all suggestions made so far (but is otherwise holding off for the other subgroups to complete their work).
- The Strategic Plan Working Group, chaired by Caroline Quijada, prepared a draft Strategic Plan, 2023-2027, which was reviewed by the board at its March Board Retreat. The draft was adjusted based on board input, and a new draft (see attached) will be sent to SIC members in advance of the Annual Meeting breakout sessions on this topic.
- We are currently accepting applications for [spring volunteering](#) on Star Island.
- We expect to send out the 2023 Annual Meeting materials on April 7. The Annual Meeting, which will take place on April 29, will be our first “hybrid” (in-person and remote) meeting in over 100 years of Annual Meetings.
- We are in the early stages of planning the 2023 Gosport Regatta, which will take place on Sunday, September 17.

In a few weeks, we will be opening up the island, and in the blink of an eye, we will be welcoming guests to the island...with Kindness.

With Star Spirit,



Joe Watts  
Chief Executive Officer