

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE STAR ISLAND CORPORATION

April 29, 2023 at 1:00 p.m. EST
First Church & Parish, Dedham, Massachusetts
And via Zoom

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by the President, Rev. Debbie Duval, at 1:04 p.m.

After welcoming all those attending and thanking our host church, she noted that this is our first hybrid meeting and asked for patience as any glitches might arise.

David Carnes is serving as parliamentarian.

Invocation

Kyle Belmont, a member of the Board of Directors and a student at Boston University's School of Theology, offered the invocation.

President's Report

Debbie Duval, pastor of the UCC church in Auburn, Maine, noted that this will be her family's 27th season on Star. She reported that the goals of the Board of Directors are extending the Beloved Community Project, completing a thorough governance review, and continued stewardship, including fundraising. The Board is working on a new Strategic Plan to be in effect through 2027. The theme for this summer is Kindness. She urged members to join the Legacy Society. She introduced the members of the Board. On behalf of the Board, she thanked the many volunteers who serve Star, including members and chairs of our many committees, the trustees of the Permanent Trust, the Isles of Shoals Association (Unitarian Universalist), the Star Island United Church of Christ, the board members and delegates of the Council of Conferences, on- and off-island volunteers, and the SIC staff.

Transitions

Board member Liz Erickson acknowledged the following transitions among the members of our community during the past year.

Marriages

Carol Carofiglio & Ellie Alpern
Cynthia Flynn & Wilmer Rivera
Stephanie Katz & Jeremy Parker

Jane Leff & Randy Becker
Arlyn Weeks & Forrest Foreman

Births

Benjamin Russell Lawrence Adams
Zachary Anderson
Evie Barnes
Warren Benedict Frye
Oliver Scott Henderson
Hazel Estelle Howell
Castin Hunnicutt

Malcolm Wang Kennedy
Gaililee Mariah Krasner
Sylvie Bea Lyon
Harriet McCarran
Leonidas Rasor-Carney
Milo Sedovic-Peloquin

Deaths

Lois Ames
Sheila Barrows
Lois (Wright) Brown
Ruth Bruns
Ron Buck
Rev. David J. Dean
Connie Dunn
Caroline French
Margaret Grometstein
Raymond Hallows, Jr.
Aaron Hamburger
Jean Hay
John Barrett Heiser

Heather MacPhee
John Main
Betsy Gimpel Mena
John Nash
Max Patton
Norman Richardson
Roy Shoults
Tom Walton
Mollie Whitaker
Conrad Yanis
Rev. Dr. Samuel Young
Thomas Zingale

Greetings and Reports from Affiliated Organizations

Tricia Coleman, President of the Isles of Shoals Association (Unitarian Universalist), began by reminding members that the ISA (UU) is a membership organization dedicated to fostering the conference experience. It raises funds for the benefit of Star. It operates the Shops on Star through the work of dozens of volunteers. Prices in the Shops are reasonable given rising costs of operation. They are improving their processes and strengthening collaboration with island staff. Sales in 2022 increased by over \$6,000. Their clergy grants program will provide up to \$6,000 to bring clergy and their families to Star for the first time. Conference grants totaling up to \$11,000 will enhance the conference experience. Direct support to the Corporation was \$33,450.

Cary Cuiccio, President of the Star Island United Church of Christ, began by thanking the outgoing President and Vice President, Keri Mattaliano and Neil Simister. She welcomed new board members Medora Barnes, Floyd Cheung, Holly Jackson, Jen Johnson, and Ryder Worthen. She recounted the success of 2022 UCC conferences, which shared the theme of Nourishment and featured arts activities as well. She noted that the conferences received an unprecedented level of requests for financial grants which they were able to meet with the help of the Corporation. The 2023 conferences will focus on relationships and community, with a unique theme for each conference.

Pel Liaison Report

Sabine Michaud, Pelican Liaison to the Board, presented the first Pel Liaison report at an Annual Meeting. She reported that staff is ready to start onboarding new summer staff and working on major capital projects. Some surveyors have already come out to work on the breakwater project. Contractors will be repairing the boardwalk between Cottages A and C and doing repairs on Cottage E and Managers. Floats are in at the dock and we are getting the Wastewater Treatment Facility up and running. Major issues last year arose from moving out of the pandemic and figuring out what Star will be in this new world. The main focus this year will be increasing the service level and working safely together as a community. New staff positions include executive chef, assistant island engineer and administrator, food service coordinator, and assistant conference center director. These positions will reduce stress on existing managerial positions. There will be increased opportunities for training and education. She asked for

understanding and support for island staff.

Financial Report

Joni Abbadessa, Treasurer of the Corporation, referred members to the written report in the meeting packet. She is honored to serve as Treasurer and the Finance Committee is phenomenal. The 2022 season was successful but surprisingly challenging. The volatility of Covid was reflected in registration and attendance. We were adjusting Covid protocols weekly. Management and staff met these challenges through tireless work. We are in a strong financial position at the end of the year. The 2022 audit is complete and clean, with no adjustment issues. This is something to be proud of. Members are encouraged to raise financial questions throughout the year.

Report of the Permanent Trust

David Yermack, Chair of the Permanent Trust, reported that this is the 25th anniversary of the Trust. It now holds \$5 million, up from \$1 million at the start. This year the Trust has received 57 gifts and bequests, totaling \$130,000. The Trust gives the Corporation 4.25% of its income annually. This year that amounted to \$212,000. The Trust's investment performance has been extraordinary. We are 50% better than we should be compared to benchmarks due to Wilkins Investment Counsel, which manages our investments. We are in the 99th percentile of small endowments and financially secure to navigate through any crises. Our investments are very progressive, consistent with UCC and UUA guidelines.

Report of the CEO

Joe Watts, CEO, noted that over 100 members are participating via Zoom. He expressed gratitude to all. He said that it was a pleasure to work with the Board and especially Debbie Duval, the President. He introduced the following new senior staff members: Bill Knox, Registrar; Laurie Contrino, Development Manager; and Chelsea Haskell, Communications and Program Manager. He thanked the following staff members who left this year: Dwayne Aljets, Mike Bray, Anne Henry, Ally Miner, and Peter Squires.

Questions and Answers on Reports

In response to a question from a member, Joe explained that the 9% increase in room and board rates for 2023 resulted from significant inflation and the fact that rates were kept flat for one year after the Covid closing. The Board and management are quite mindful that this is an added burden and funds available for financial grants have been increased significantly. We were at 60% capacity in 2021 and 90% in 2022. We are getting back to 100% registration which is the target for 2023.

Debbie Duval then explained the voting procedure.

Proposed Changes to Bylaws

Tom Kennedy, Vice President, explained that the proposed changes to the bylaws included in the meeting packet reflect the fact that the Annual Meeting is now conducted in a hybrid format, with electronic voting. Electronic voting was not precluded by the existing bylaws, but the proposed changes make it explicit that electronic voting is allowed.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, and after an opportunity for discussion, the membership

VOTED, with one opposed and no abstentions, to amend the bylaws as proposed.

Report of the Membership Committee and Action

Caroline Quijada, Chair of the Membership Committee, presented its report, nominating the following individuals for membership in the Corporation: Ariel Aaronson-Eves, Sarah Aznive, Kate Conquest, Garrett Hastings, Julia Manners, Joni Praded, Tammy Prull, Tom Reid, John Reynolds, Beth Ruekberg and Dr. Heidi Weiskel.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the membership

VOTED, with none opposed and one abstention, to elect these individuals to membership in the Corporation.

Caroline then presented the nominations of the following members to emeritus status: Barbara Buck, Dudley Dudley, Dr. Robert Gray, Georgie Haykin, Patricia Hollingsworth, and Rev. Kitsy Winthrop.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the membership

VOTED, with none opposed and no abstentions, to elect these individuals to emeritus status.

Approval of the Minutes of the 2022 Annual Meeting

Arlyn Weeks, Clerk of the Corporation, moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the 2022 Annual Meeting and to approve those minutes as presented by the Clerk of the Corporation. The motion was seconded, and the membership

VOTED, with two votes in opposition and no abstentions, to approve the minutes of the 2022 Annual Meeting.

Approval of Reports

Arlyn Weeks moved to accept the President's Report, the reports from the affiliated organizations (ISA UU and SIUCC), the Pel Liaison's Report, the Financial Report, the Report of the Permanent Trust, the Report of the CEO, and the Report of the Membership Committee.

The motion was seconded, and the membership

VOTED, with none opposed and no abstentions, to accept the foregoing reports.

Report of the Nominating Committee and Action

Liz Erickson, Board Liaison to the Nominating Committee, presented its report, nominating the following individuals to the indicated positions:

Debbie Duval to a third 3-year term as a Director

Tom Kennedy to a second 3-year term as a Director

April Rosario to a second 3-year term as a Director

Arlyn Weeks to a one-year term as Clerk

Joni Abbadessa to a one-year term as Treasurer

Kathy Lord to a second five-year term as a Trustee of the Permanent Trust

There were no nominations from the floor. Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the membership

VOTED to close nominations, with none in opposition and one abstention.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the membership then

VOTED to elect the slate of nominated individuals, with none opposed and no abstentions.

Nominations to the Nominating Committee and Action

Lucia Green-Weiskel, Board liaison to the Committee on Appointments, presented the Board's nominees for positions on the Nominating Committee:

Erik Cordes for a first three-year term

Lia Yanis for a first three-year term

Irene Bush for a second three-year term

Patricia Coleman for a second three-year term and to serve as Co-Chair

Julie Jowaisas to serve as Co-Chair

Upon a motion from the President, with no need for a second, the membership

VOTED to close nominations for the Nominating Committee, with none opposed and no abstentions,

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the membership

VOTED to elect the slate of nominees to the Nominating Committee, with none opposed and no abstentions.

Special Nominating Committee Report

Caroline Quijada, a member of the Special Nominating Committee, reported that the committee will nominate Debbie Duval to serve a one-year term as President and Tom Kennedy to serve a one-year term as Vice President. The Board will vote on these nominations at its next meeting.

Ratification of Board Actions and Technical Motions

Arlyn Weeks, Clerk of the Corporation, presented the following motions for consideration by the membership:

I move to ratify and approve all acts of the Officers and Directors of the Corporation since the last Annual Meeting, as disclosed in the minutes and other Corporation records.

After the motion was seconded, the membership

VOTED to approve the motion, with none opposed and no abstentions.

I further move that the Treasurer, the President of the Corporation and the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation be authorized to sell, assign and endorse for transfer certificates representing stocks, bonds, mutual funds or other securities now registered or hereafter registered in the name of the Corporation.

After the motion was seconded, the membership

VOTED to approve the motion, with none opposed and no abstentions.

Conflict, Communications, and Community

Rev. Leon Dunkley, Board member, and Rev. Christana Wille McKnight, Island Minister and Beloved Community Project Manager, presented a slide show focused on our Mission Statement and our values. Our shared principles and non-profit values are based on an intentional community. Conflicts are inevitable in human relationships. The Board and the staff recently held a conflict resolution training session, reframing conflict as an opportunity to learn and grow. Large organizations are built on long-established structures. Governance review, in which the Board is now engaged, is a comprehensive process to clarify and streamline existing structures and processes. We are practicing trust. We will consciously engage in kindness this season. The Board is also preparing a new vision statement for the Corporation and members will have opportunities to participate in this task.

What to Expect This Summer

Joe Watts noted that there have been many adjustments during the past four years. Staffing was a major issue in the past year. He is excited about the coming season as we begin a “new normal.” The Isles of Shoals are constantly reinventing themselves, as is Star. Many traditions were once new; change itself is a tradition. We are a community of care and kindness. Taking care of one another will be very important for everyone this summer. We can focus on the broader community.

The pandemic affected staffing. End of summer staffing became a greater problem over the years, particularly last year. We were down three year-round staff positions at one point this year but we are now fully staffed with some added positions. We had a 17% increase in Pelican applications and have several end of season agreements already. Members are encouraged to help recruit for end of season positions.

Food service is a top priority for this year along with housekeeping. There will be more waitrae. We are working on the challenges with outdoor dining. There will be vegan and vegetarian main courses. Housekeeping is updating protocols and manuals. During the regular season, beds will be made upon arrival.

Fire safety is a top priority. We have an exceptional relationship with the Rye NH Fire Department. There will be a new fire panel behind the front desk and 100 smoke detectors will be replaced. The Underworld is the Fire Department’s chief concern. We are planning with an architect and the Facilities Committee to redo the entire area over a number of years. We will be moving the laundry and upgrading the Pelican dining hall.

Replacing the boardwalk is already underway, similar to the work done on the front porch. This is a \$100,000 project, with some grant support. Work will be done on Cottage E and Managers. The Army Corps of Engineers has hired a contractor to repair all of the breakwaters to protect the harbor and the islands and to address the rising sea level. Work will start by May 15. They will be loading equipment and 15-ton rocks from the beach to the breakwater because they can’t do this directly from the harbor due to the presence of protected eel grass. The contractor will have RVs on the island to house workers. We are hoping to work with the contractor in the fall to improve the perimeter road.

The Wastewater Treatment Facility is subject to a 2% 30-year loan and is engaged in a pilot program to reuse effluent.

A newsletter is coming soon, as is the Annual Fund spring appeal.

Question and Answer Period

Joe Watts responded to questions from members as follows.

The deadline for applications for financial grants for regular season conferences was April 15. Requests have already exceeded the amount budgeted.

We are hoping to model interpersonal change by having conversations and finding ways to stop fostering hurt.

Child-friendly options in the dining room should be part of the focus on food service.

Family style dining takes 7 more waitrae with the accompanying costs of housing, wages, etc. We might try doing it for the banquets this year. Sit-down service might be available for those with mobility issues.

Breakout Session Overview

Debbie Duval explained that two breakout sessions would be offered next. Tom Kennedy gave a brief overview of the Governance Review session and Caroline Quijada explained the Strategic Plan session.

The meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m. for the breakout sessions.

The meeting reconvened at 4:35 p.m.

Reporting Back From Breakout Sessions

Due to time constraints, reports from the breakout sessions will be shared at a later time.

Board Members Completing Their Service

Keri Mattaliano. Debbie Duval presented the following appreciation of Keri Mattaliano:

“Keri Mattaliano came to Star as a very young child and to my knowledge has not missed a summer since. She attends Star Gathering 1 which was formerly known as UCC1. Keri has been an active member of the SIUCC Board for many years and served as their President, and in turn on our Board, for the past three years. Keri brought the median age of our Board down and over and over and over again proved the importance of the ‘younger’ voice being heard in our community and on our Board.

“While on the Board, Keri served on our financial grants group and will continue to do so. She was our Health Committee liaison, during the pandemic—which as you all know was a ton of work as we navigated our way through the challenges of the ever-changing Covid 19 and its impact on our community. Keri also served on the Special Nominating Committee for three years.

“I think I first met Keri when she was a teen in our Youth Conference. Although she is a good 20 years my junior, I have often wondered which of us is the elder?”

“Keri is wise beyond her years. She is articulate, intelligent, kind, passionate, levelheaded, and asks really good questions. She has been a remarkable source of support when it comes to marketing and outreach topics as well as Beloved Community topics. She has the gift of being able to see the big picture and somehow magically seems to understand the specifics and the workings of things.

“She was seemingly always available, both day and night, to talk and attend to all things Star. And!! ... she managed to do this as she spent the last year on the Board, traveling across the country. Some days she didn’t even know what time zone she was in, but, without fail, she always made it in time to our Board meetings.

“Lastly, on a personal note, I want to publicly thank Keri for the kind care that she offered me. Seriously, she took **really** good care of this President. She brought gluten free/vegan desserts and donuts to all of the in-person meetings. She texted and called before and after meetings to check in, offered to do more, always, and even let me ugly cry on her shoulder when I had my annual meltdown on island.

“I am in awe and in love with this amazing human and I ask you to join me in thanking her for her service on the Board by giving her a big round of applause.

“We have a special silver star for you, Keri, and now that you are settled in San Diego, we know where to mail it to.”

Bringer of Light Award

Debbie Duval noted that the Board of Directors created the Bringer of Light Award in 2009 to acknowledge significant and extraordinary contributions by a Corporation member to Star Island. Past award recipients include:

Irene Bush
Edith & Dave Pierson
Dan Fenn
Dave & Patty Boynton
Dick Case & Bruce Parsons
Tom & Susy Mansfield
Ed Rutledge
Meg & Dick LeSchack
Brad Greeley
Karen Mathiasen
Edmund Jones
Steve & Edie Whitney

Tricia Coleman presented the award on behalf of the Board to Lois Williams, as follows:

“I’m here today to talk to you about my dear friend Lois Williams, and the Bringer of Light Award.

“The Bringer of Light Award is our collective acknowledgement of a Star Island Corporation member who embodies extraordinary service, significant involvement, island citizenship, and active participation. We have presented this award 13 times to Shoalers whose contributions have all been expressed in different ways. Lois’ particular expression is quite literal—she brings the light to our history and invites you to look deeper at our shared story.

“Lois is the much-loved matriarch of the Williams Family, whom she first brought to the island 50 years ago. Lois holds a PhD in Education with a long-time passion for history. She is a member of ISHRA (Isles of Shoals Historical Research Association) and serves on the island Heritage and Artifacts Committee. She is also a cherished doyenne of the All Star 1 family who takes pride in her accomplishments, enjoys her playful humor, and values her sincerity and perspective. Lois serves on the AS 1 governing council as a lifetime member.

“Inspired by the 200th anniversary of the iconic chapel on Star Island in 2000, Lois began her research into the history of the Shoals. She wrote and published a book in 2006, “Religion at the Isles of Shoals.” This book traces the religious history of the isles and chronicles the lives of the ministers who have served the community throughout the years. This book was followed by several others. Lois continues to write, most recently turning her attention to the forgotten stories of enslaved and marginalized people in Virginia.

“Dr. Williams is deeply involved with the preservation and documentation of Star Island artifacts in the Vaughn Cottage collection and has an abiding interest in the history of Star. She is passionate about sharing that history with all Shoalers, new and old. Vaughn Cottage, the collection, and Shoals history are Lois’ passion. Further, in her role as an educator, she is largely responsible for the panels in Brookfield which present the history of life on the Isles from European contact through the Hotel era. These panels are part of a welcoming and teaching center on the island that introduces newcomers to Star and the surrounding islands. Lois is also influential in the artifacts display in the Oceanic lobby and in crafting the Vaughn library pamphlet encouraging visitors to explore Vaughn Cottage.

“Lois has made a deliberate and thoughtful choice to share her gifts with Star Island. Her contributions have been measurable and her impact dramatic. She is the greatest ambassador for Star Island, preserving the past and bringing that history to the attention of the public—that is her motivation for her generous donation and her dedicated work in spreading the good news about Star.

“After her beloved husband, Pete, passed away Lois thoughtfully decided to direct her resources in support of the significant renovations and improvements to Vaughn Cottage, including a critically needed environmentally controlled space to preserve our irreplaceable artifacts.

“Although a thoughtful and careful scholar and author, Lois is not without humor and spontaneity. In 2008, when Tom and I were chairing All Star 1, we overheard a lunchtime conversation where an Old Shoaler was foisting a particularly egregious, but oft repeated, bon

mot of island history that was colorful, interesting and, characteristically, outrageously and blatantly untrue. Sensing the moment, we approached Lois who declared a ‘History Emergency.’ Lois was immediately ready—every fiber of her ‘Historical Warrior’ body at full alert. At the following meal, not only did Lois gently restore the Goddess Truth to her rightful place, she went on in the following days to bring, at mealtime, interesting and thoughtful historical tidbits to life...

“More recently, she was spotted at the center of an All Star 1 FLASH MOB, performing Michael Jackson’s ‘Thriller’!

“In her book ‘Religion at the Isles of Shoals’ Lois dedicates three pages to acknowledgements of her fellow Shoalers. She has a great spirit of collaboration and appreciation. She closes with these words:

Lastly, I honor my husband, Peter Williams, who in 1975 convinced me that a Star Island conference would be a fine family experience. We brought Jane, Gilbert, Katherine, Annie, Louise, and later Bobby to the island, and we have ever since been Shoalers. Thirty years later, Peter encouraged my efforts to present an important aspect of Shoals history to the Shoals community.

“Lois, we are so grateful that Pete convinced you all those years ago, and that you continue to devote time, talent, and treasure in so many ways. We are forever changed and far better for your presence in our lives, for your manner, goodness, and grace, for your commitment, passion, and genuine humility.

“Now, our history will record that we pay tribute to you—Doctor Lois Williams—for your dedication to the vision of Star Island, and for the telling of our Story of which **YOU** are such an important part.

“Lois, please accept this Bringer of Light Award with our deep respect and appreciation.”
There was no other business to consider.

Closing Words

Closing words were offered by Board Member April Rosario.

Adjournment

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the membership

VOTED, with none in opposition and no abstentions, to adjourn the 2023 Annual Meeting of the Star Island Corporation at 4:55 p.m.

Submitted by
Arlyn Weeks, Clerk