

To: All Star I Conference Chairman's Meeting
From: Mary Trudeau, Clerk of Star Island Board of Directors
Date: October 19, 2015
RE: Update on Star Island Conference Center: Summer 2015

Star Island had a very successful summer. The goal of 19,550 bed nights was substantially achieved, with approximately 99.4% (or 19,437 bed nights) filled by the end of the season. This is an important milestone and reflects a tremendous effort by Star Island marketing staff, as well as the marketing efforts of individual conferences to continue to increase attendance during the 14 week conference season. In addition to a solid marketing effort, there were several reasons for this success: IRAS has returned to Star Island (in 2014), and plans to continue holding their meetings on the Island for the foreseeable future; the weather was generally good; and the September conferences were well attended.

All Star I continues to be a large and expansive conference, with our community filling the traditional week- long conference, and beyond. All Star I contributed 2053 bed nights to the summer, leading the next closest conference by nearly two hundred bed nights! In addition, All Star I continues to expand its influence on the Island! Carl and Cheryl Ann Sturken organized a "musical" weekend in mid- September, contributing over 110 bed nights to the Island total. While many of the conferees originated from All Star I, there were new shoalers and representatives from other conferences, as well. Pam and Phil Pierce, as well as Jane and Tom Griffiths attended the Chamber Music conference in September, blending with the Carl Sturken Music Weekend crowd. At the end of the summer, Tom and Tricia Coleman organized the ISA conference, as well as the New England Heritage conference, and contributed significantly to several small conferences in early to mid- September, again adding lots of bed nights to the Island account. Pel Reunion was well represented with All Star I shoalers, including Scottie and Annie Stewart, Joanne Bulley, Roger Trudeau, Nancy Meyer and Dick Case, Deb and Ben Soule, and Liz Erickson. Several other All Star I shoalers attended one or more conferences during the summer, we are clearly a loyal group of shoalers!

There is good news on the Island on many levels. The Star Island staff has continued to actively pursue grant monies to fund various island projects. The Resource Recovery Center (aka "the dump") received a 10K dollar grant from The Cogswell Benevolent Trust. The RRC currently recycles much of the food waste, cardboard and glass generated on the Island. The Portsmouth Garden Club donated \$280 dollars to the Pel Gardens. Our own Sarah Mills contributed to preparation of a successful grant application for the preservation of materials in Vaughan Cottage, and the Island is currently a finalist for the Seven to Save grant award from the NH Preservation Alliance. Star Island staff has applied for an LCHIP grant for 125K dollars to restore portions of the Oceanic Hotel, porch and Atlantic House exterior. This is the organization that funded the recent north and east wall weatherization project, as well as the new red roof on the Hotel [2 separate grants], and staff is optimistic that funding will be awarded to the Island for this project, as well. Additionally, FEMA, the agency that funded the pier renovations, is working with the Island to determine eligibility for additional grant monies. While we have not submitted a 2015 application, yet, staff is busy defining and developing projects that fit the FEMA criteria. Clearly the Island is working to fund and support the Island from a variety of sources.

Development Office is having a good summer, as well. At the end of August, gifts and pledges totaled 432K towards the 2015 fundraising goal. As of the end of September, we were at \$305K received towards our Annual Fund goal of \$465K. This figure represents an increase of 9% in total gifts and pledges compared to 2014 year to date numbers. More importantly, we have 930 donors compared to 844 donors at this time last year. Pam Smith, the new Development Director, is pleased with the numbers to date, and is optimistic that we will meet the Annual Fund goal of \$465K dollars. We are also doing well with targeted fundraising – Green Gosport Initiative first and foremost – The Green Gosport Initiative has been a means of encouraging regular donations in this period between capital campaigns, and the Island has received some excellent news coverage for the solar array, recycling efforts and sustainability practices. In another development, the Board recently approved a “sponsorship” policy, which addresses things like advertising. This will help increase revenue from events such as the Regatta. In an end of the year push, the Development team is organizing a larger than usual “phonathon” and welcomes any and all shoalers willing to dial and solicit from fellow shoalers in early December.

In recent years, the Island has been spending approximately \$400K dollars per year to maintain the existing facilities [last year was much more due to funding for pier, but generally this is true]. This upcoming year, a major project will involve the restoration of the west wall of the Atlantic; the construction of a new interior stairwell with fire access egress for the Atlantic corridor; and restoration of the west end of the porch. If funds allow, this work will continue to the south wall and porch of the Atlantic, including reconstruction of the “tower” annex. While much of this work is mandated by efforts to meet the State Fire Code, the continuing maintenance of the building exteriors is an ongoing, and never ending, effort. As noted above, this work is the subject of the current LCHIP grant application, cross your fingers that we receive full funding!

Plans for the construction of a new wastewater treatment plant are almost finalized, and the Island staff plans on pursuing permits from the State for the new system this winter. The new system is considerably more energy efficient than the existing system, and produces a very clean effluent, suitable for re use. The long term savings: reduced monitoring and operation costs, as well as reduction in dependence on diesel fuel work towards the Island goal of sustainability and green initiatives. The Island plans on using the treated wastewater in the toilets on the Island, eliminating the salt water from the system. Construction of the system will require the addition of an enclosed building to protect the new system from freezing, and will allow for year round treatment of sewage. The funding of the system is currently undefined. The staff estimates that the cost of the system will be approaching one million dollars, and is likely to be funded through a combination of loans, grants and other means. While the Island does not anticipate financing and constructing the system in 2016, it is possible that this could happen if financing becomes available, the existing system begins to fail or interest rates appear poised to rise substantially. It will take a lot of work and many hands to raise the funding needed for this important/essential project, but we are confident we can make it happen over the next 1-3 years.

The Island is currently reviewing housing needs for Senior Staff. The current situation is untenable, with senior staff literally rotating beds to maximize accommodations. Employee retention is difficult and the Island is looking at ways to improve amenities with an eye to maintaining continuity in the staff. The Island is looking at several options, and it may be that a few conference beds are lost in the effort to provide better housing for full summer residents. If anyone is so inclined, now might be a good time to donate a new dormitory for staff use! In short, the Island is in a good place. We have come off of a strong summer season, both financially and with great energy. All Star I continues to be a leader amongst conferences in both attendance and financial support, this is a good place to be!

