



President's Message

By Charles H. Hall

As we count the successes of our 15th Annual Cultural Day on Sapelo Island, Georgia, we express our thanks and gratitude for everyone's contributions of time, finances, and labor in assisting the organization with its progress and development. It is with the

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Membership Information

Dear SICARS Member,

We cannot express how meaningful your SICARS membership is to us. Every member takes us one step closer to the ultimate goals of our organization: Land Retention, Cultural Revitalization, and Economic Development. As we are changing the esthetics of the organization, we would first like to notify you that our "Yearly Memberships" will now begin and end as a standard calendar year (Jan. 1 - Dec. 31). We also would like to take the opportunity to reach out and encourage those who have expired memberships to come on back and rejoin SICARS on our movement towards change and success in the Hogg Hummock Historic District. None of our successes would have come without you, and our goal is to increasingly grow and make more people a part of our future successes here on Sapelo Island, Georgia. For more information, please contact us at our Hogg Hummock office.

SICARS staff

Volunteerism – the policy or practice of volunteering one's time or talent for charitable, educational, or other worthwhile activities, especially in one's community (definition from Dictionary.com).

Over the past several months SICARS has been blessed with the support of individuals from the Hogg Hummock Historic District, general and associate members of SICARS, and educational mainland groups who have volunteered their time. First, the lime-light shines on the island youth who contributed a combined 250 hours of their summer vacation to rid the future site of the storage/warehouse facility next to the SICARS Hogg Hummock Office of brush, debris, and tree limbs, to toting 30lb logs and neatly placing them in a military style stack. The outstanding efforts of Kyle Alexander (16), Cory McGill (15), Chris Bailey (14), and Tyler Flores (9) sped up the process. Captain Joel Hillery, Larry Johnson, Kent Grovner, Quentin Wilson, Pete Wilson, Jr., John Charles Walker, Francenia and Alphonso Bailey, and Mr. & Mrs. Irene Grovner, Jr. have also dedicated some of their time working with SICARS. Whether it be manning the chainsaw, pulling a rope to direct a tree, cutting and edging landscape, painting or carpentry, your time and talents are greatly appreciated. We all have a lot to bring to the table, if we all bring one tool, item, or talent, we

Volunteerism

can all feast on the successes of our future.

We were also graced with an appearance from the Grady High Camp this summer. The Grady High Camp is a youth group organized by Ayinde Summers. The group containing 15 youth and 5 adults spent a weekend camping at descendant Maurice Bailey's camp ground on Sapelo. The enthusiastic group tackled the job of cleaning and piling debris from Behavior Cemetery to its new property line which will extend the current fence line out to Long Tabby Road.

SICARS strives to always makes youth visits to Sapelo educational. The group experienced an island tour that included a Nanny Goat Beach expedition and even a low-country boil.

Before and after the camp, **all** of the maintenance and cleanliness of Behavior had lay on the shoulders of one man: Joseph Hall. Mr. Hall continues to do wonders with the appearance of our ancestral burial ground. From landscape to debris removal, Joseph Hall has been volunteering his time to nurse one of our most important culturally historic sites.

The gratitude cannot be expressed as to how thankful we are to all who have volunteered their time.



Sapelo Island's Cultural Interpretive Village

The Cultural Interpretive Village (C.I.V.) will serve as an educational hub for everyone to see and share the history and the cultural lifestyle of the African Kissi Nation from West Africa to their present location. This Cultural Interpretive Village will focus on a history that has influence the lives of the Africans in America on Sapelo Island. The C.I.V. will include a facility for living history to be put on view, arts and crafts stores, a facility for cultural food/cuisine preparation as well as a museum and exhibits of the lifestyles of the Africans that were brought to Sapelo first as slaves.

The Cultural Interpretive Village will be truly an educational experience as well as a tourist attraction in the form of a village which celebrates the cultural traditions of family and ancestral history from West Africa to current living here on Sapelo Island, Georgia.

Although we have been granted the acreage needed for the village, we have not been granted the funding needed for the project to take flight. A total of \$1,632,000.00 must be raised to fund our equipment, building materials, and workers. All donations, volunteers, or references are welcome. This project will be for everyone, so please join us in our path of educational, historical, and economic developmental progress.

Coming Soon: The Geechee Griot **Going Green!**

Reducing waste, reducing costs, cutting back on the amount of mail you get—we're all about that these days! We would now like to announce that this will be the last hard copy of "The Griot" that will be printed and mailed. Beginning with the next publication spring 2010, we will provide you with the same news and updates about the SICARS organization and Sapelo Island via an electronic version.

To assure that you will continue to receive your Griot experience, please send us your e-mail address to info@sapeloislandgeorgia.org.

The full online and in color version will be delivered to your inbox in a timely fashion keeping you informed with special events and notifying you of SICARS current successes.

Our ultimate goals are to save our culture and historic land, we now hope to help save our environment. We are hopeful you appreciate these efforts in our attempt to "Go Green" and we look forward to reporting to you.

Sincerely,
SICARS staff

SICARS will construct a Cultural



Interpretive Village or C.I.V. on **25** acres of ancestral lands in the Hogg Hummock Historic District. In addition, negotiations are being finalized regarding the construction of 40 culturally

respectful residential dwellings (on 40 acres), an artists retreat and nature center (on 8.5 acres), and a mechanic shop (on 1 acre) are part of the proposed usage plan for the additional ancestral lands. The capital campaign goal for the C.I.V. is \$1.632 million. All construction contributions can be made directly to SICARS at any Bank of America nation wide.



Reaching Out...

With a new method and approach, Sapelo Island Cultural and Revitalization Society (SICARS) has gained the ability to reach out and grow to new heights within the tourism industry. The will to spread the word has led to the reaching out to others to put Sapelo Island on the map as a culturally and an educationally important tourist stop along the Southeast Coast of Georgia. The reach out program has successfully gained partnerships with the McIntosh Art Association (Darien, GA), and the Darien and McIntosh County Chamber and Visitor's Center. The SICARS staff even extended boundaries by displaying information at four more visitor's centers located on I-95 North and South bound sides of the Georgia-South Carolina and Georgia-Florida state lines.

The McIntosh Art Association has granted us a full display in the aged Jailhouse Museum in nearby Darien. The museum showcased all types of art crafted by Sapelo Island descendants and information about our culture and the current movement. Tourists are able to view and purchase hand made sweet grass baskets, dolls, driftwood frames, and nets. The display also included an extravagant sewing machine used over a century ago by our ancestors as well as quilts and constantly plays a copy of the Cultural Interpretive Village animated DVD to show the goals and progress of our efforts. Contact information for Sapelo Island artists, lodging, and descendant tour guides are also displayed.

David VS. Goliath

For the first time ever, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Commissioner and the McIntosh County Commission Chairman and District Representative for Sapelo sat together in the same room to answer questions and discuss issues presented by Hogg Hummock Historic District residents. Many pressing issues were spoken upon; Why do the drainage ditches flood? How come we have to suffer every time it rains because the roads wash away? Why not cut the trees down that consistently fall on our power lines and leave us unable to see, use hot water, or even cook in our kitchen?

We need to cut down all of the trees that have a possibility of knocking down the power lines. We need to research our genealogy so we can actually show what belongs to whom. These ditches need to drain efficiently so we can lose our fear of a child falling into one, or of the alligators who invade the community because those ditches provide the water in which they inhabit. It would be great if descendants didn't have to avoid the historically beautiful North End tour because it rained the night before. Imagine having the ability to work a normal 9-5 on the mainland without speeding to the dock for the 5:30 but instead doing groceries because there is a more convenient boat. Surely, Kyle and Cory would love to come home after practices and games. All of these



His-story Nursed to Health by Descendants

In addition to the interior work, roof, siding, and windows done by Mr. Julius Bailey and Mr. Larry Johnson, the Historic District's Farmers Alliance Hall looks strong and elegant due to the beautiful restoration job done by some island descendants.

Mr. Cephus Walker was awarded the contract for the paint restoration and after doing a majority of the exterior work with a hand brush, Mr. Walker hired some youth descendants to assist him on the interior paint restoration. For a total of 10 days John Charles Walker and Alfonso Bailey purposefully cared for the aged building.

Our buildings stand strong because of the foundation, know that WE are the foundation, and as a strong people, like the buildings we construct, are built to last.

problems were voiced **BY** the community, and our strength was shown in numbers.

The meeting included the newly appointed Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Chris Clark (elected 2009), McIntosh County Commission Chairman Boyd Gault and Commissioner Charles Jordan.

The meeting was scheduled due to the myriad of quality of life issues on Sapelo. The community's attendance was incredible and in one hour some conclusions were found.

As a result the county immediately put their road crew to work for five weeks to improve the road conditions. In addition, the county cut brush and weeds from all of the drainage ditches within the Hogg Hummock Historic District.

A ground breaking topic was the DNR turning over the entire tourist responsibilities and the Plantation to the Hogg Hummock Historic District residents for a community lead tourism industry to be launched. Further discussions will be held.

Marcus A. Shell

Marcus Allen Shell is a 23 year old native of New Bedford, Massachusetts. He graduated from New Bedford High School in 2004 and attended the University of Massachusetts

Dartmouth to pursue a Business Management degree. A member of a large loving family he understands the importance of a family oriented environment.

He first came to Sapelo Island in 1995 to visit his extended Hall family. His return to the Hogg Hummock Historic District (14 years later) came in late February 2009, a visit that would change him as a man. As he learned of the wrong-doings and mistreatment of his new found family, Marcus chose to fall in line with the movement.

Very much involved with the community, Marcus has helped paint the Farmers Alliance Hall and assists with the property's landscape. He became a member of Saint Luke Baptist Church located on Sapelo Island and was baptized in the Atlantic Ocean near Nanny Goat Beach.

As a full time SICARS volunteer, Marcus Shell has dedicated himself to the cause and is appreciative of his acceptance by community members.

the Geechee griot

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SICARS is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation formed in 1993 to promote land retention, economic development, and cultural preservation.

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Hogg Hummock

VS

Hog Hammock

dictionary.com defines a **hammock** as a hanging bed or couch made of canvas, netted cord, or the like, with cords attached to supports at each end

AND

hummock as an elevated tract of land rising above the general level of a marshy region

Therefore, we choose to revert to the latter.

President's Message continued from page one...

deepest pride that we mention some of our accomplishments:

1. The Farmers Alliance Hall's restoration is complete.
2. The Farmers Alliance Hall bathroom is constructed and fully operational.
3. Trees are removed and dirt is in place for the construction of the storage shed (for SICARS vehicles and construction equipment).

Tasks that are scheduled to be completed in the next 12 months:

1. A Fire Station with a fire truck and garage in Hogg Hummock.
2. Renovation and opening of a Health and Wellness Facility.
3. Expanded usage of the Hogg Hummock Historic District Senior Citizens Center for Cultural Geechee Cuisine.

- Contributors - Farmers Alliance Hall Garage Sale Fundraiser Cultural Day 2008 & Spring 2009

Frank & Barbara Price
Julius & Cornelia Bailey
Ire Gene & Yvonne Grovner
Shirley & Rosetta Walker
Ms. Josephine Walker
George & Lulu Walker
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Contributors continued...

Lila Hillery
Larry & Mitchell Johnson
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Mr. & Mrs. Julius Bailey, III
Robin Driggers
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JR & Shaunda Grovner
James & Sybil Maund
Ms. Bernice Banks
Alford & Mary Bailey
William & Maggie Banks
Chris & Barbara Bailey
Mr. & Mrs. Bill Merriman
Ms. Lu
Mrs. Mattie Banks
Marcus A. Shell

Saint Luke Baptist Church News

Thursday, November 26,
2009, Thanksgiving service will be held at St. Luke Baptist Church.

The Christmas program for December 2009 will be held at St. Luke Baptist Church. Date and time will be given at a later date.

the Geechee griot

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