

# The Griot



The Sapelo Island Cultural and Revitalization Society, Inc. Newsletter

Spring 2021

SICARS website: <http://www.sapeloislandga.org>

Volume 1

email [sicars912@gmail.com](mailto:sicars912@gmail.com)

## ***SICARS Mission***

***The Sapelo Island Cultural & Revitalization Society is dedicated to the preservation of the culture of African American Descendants of Sapelo Island, Ga. The society promotes land retention, economic development, cultural and historic preservation.***



*From the desk of President Ronald Johnson*

Greetings Everyone,

I am pleased to announce that the Reorganized SICARS Board of Directors has been in many planning sessions over the last several months. The Organization continues to operate under a committee system that includes Board of Directors and Members. The vision and Mission of SICARS created by the Hog Hammock community has always been the same and we are committed to them.

Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, we have made the decision to put your health and safety first. And have cancelled our regular meetings, Cultural Day and other events. The committees are diligently working, and we will keep you updated as when our meetings and events will resume.

It is important that we preserve and revitalize the rich culture and history of the 44 original descendant families of Sapelo Island and with that said, we call on all descendants, supporters, neighbors and our friends to become members get involved to preserve this most unique and historical resources. Hog Hammock is the last Island base Geechee Community in America and it is the Pearl of Sapelo Island, McIntosh County, The Great State of Georgia and The World. We thank you for your patience and encouragement.

May God Bless Us All

***Ronald Johnson***

***President of S.I.C.A.R.S.***

## SICARS Board of Directors

Ronald Johnson	President
Karen Grovner Hillery	Vice President
Cheryl Williams Grant	Secretary
Andrea Dixon	Treasurer
Terrance Baker	Board member
Francine Bailey	Board member
Lewis Jackson	Board member
Maurice Bailey	Board member
Larry Johnson	Board member

***"Coming together is a beginning, working together is progress, staying together is success"***

### SICARS Office Operations

The office of SICARS currently is not open daily, but we will keep you posted as to the upcoming status of operations. Due to COVID 19 pandemic, we as SICARS board made the decision to put your health and safety first and have cancelled all regular in office meetings. To contact the office about any assistance and/or concerns, please contact Karen @ (912) 270-3154.

Thanks to all, who came out and supported our gathering at SICARS Multipurpose Center in February, in **observance of Black History Community Event**. Thank you Mike Grovner, Joel Hillery, & SICARS board members for all of your support and donations. It really meant a lot to see how, our community could pull together. Thank you to all visitors, who stopped to say hello and made a purchase, your support was greatly appreciated. *Looking forward to a greater celebration in 2022.*

### Membership Drive

SICARS membership application has been updated and is NOW ready for YOU. Membership shows a very strong force of support for the organization, therefore if you are asking yourself "what can I do to help? "Get on board". A membership application is attached to the back of this newsletter, in SICARS office or the web [www.sapeloislandga.org](http://www.sapeloislandga.org).

### Grant Awards Announcement

*We are excited to announce a grant award to Sicars from the Southern Partners Fund. SICARS was awarded a grant disbursement of \$40,000. The funds will be used for a number of projects, operational, and organizational needs including; but not limited to; the installation of an air conditioning and heating system in the SICARS office. We are truly grateful to Southern Partners Fund for their support of the Sapelo Island Cultural & Revitalization Society.*

*Southern Partners Fund (SPF) is a regional community foundation located in Atlanta, GA, governed by people of color grassroots leaders from rural communities across 12 states in the Southeast.*

## LAND RETENTION

Jasper Watts, who serves as Committee Chair on land retention, has been working on multiple important matters concerning the community. For more information and to follow up on areas concerning land retention and historical and cultural preservation, please refer to the website [www.sapeloislandga.org](http://www.sapeloislandga.org). Please follow Jasper on SICARS website. Jasper is one valuable and extraordinary man, whom we are very blessed to have him on board with the organization. Get to know the amazing facts and stay up to date with his ongoing efforts with the area of land retention.

### SICARS Agricultural Projects

The initial vision for SICARS' agricultural project was both to make Saltwater Geechee food ways and culture visible across the landscape on Sapelo Island in the face of changes on island but also to grow crops that could be sold to produce profits that could be reinvested into the community and create employment opportunities. Since 2017 the program has continued to grow under the leadership of Maurice Bailey and the groups we have partnered with including University of Georgia, Davidson College, Clemson University and others. Geechee Red Peas were the first crop we started growing on Sapelo and they continue to be an important crop and are now growing on several fields across the community. In 2017 we planted sugarcane and it continues to rapidly expand. In 2020 we produced our first Sapelo Geechee Syrup for market and sold out in a week thanks in part to attention from an article in the New York Times featuring our efforts. In addition to these two crops, we have begun to establish other crops. In partnership with the International Center for Indigo Culture (ICIC) and the State Botanical Garden at the University of Georgia we have started to grow Indigo on Sapelo and process the plant into dye for textiles. Additionally, we have started to reestablish sour orange trees on Sapelo as well as cultivate a local variety of garlic.

## *Hog Hammock Community NEWS & updates*

### FAITH MATTERS

**Isaiah 40:31** *but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.*

*We continue to hold strong to our beliefs and fellowship of family and friends. Covid19 has of course have an impact on our community as well, therefore until further notice, we ask that you keep our church families in your prayers. GOD Bless and Keep us ALL*

**First African Baptist & St. Luke Baptist Church, Sapelo Island, GA**



**St. Luke Baptist audio services (Wed nights 7pm & every 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday morning @ 11 am)**

**Wed Bible study (605)313-6417 code 681049 / Sunday service (425)436-6317 code 312 5791**

# Hog Hammock Community Library



The Hog Hammock Community Library recently received a “FACE LIFT”, yes, the building has been dressed up with protective window storm shutters, which is very lovely attraction to the community sights.

Finally, we would like to let everyone know that you can find our updates on our Facebook page. (Hog Hammock Public Library) and on our blog (<https://hoghammock.blogspot.com>)

All donations are welcomed and appreciated. We are a 501C organization. Send donations to Hog Hammock Public Library 1023 Hillery Lane/ P.O. box 69 Sapelo Island, Ga 31327 (912)485-2291. HATS OFF TO YOU SHUN! **GREAT JOB!**

Thank you,  
Shuntisk Wilson,  
Library Manager

## **The Hog Hammock Community Foundation**

The Hog Hammock Foundation in 2019 appointed Joel Hillery Sr as the President. President Hillery, then selected a seven-member panel to assist him on the board. The foundation oversees the area of the community alongside the Hog Hammock Library and playground the boundary areas of entrance into the community nearing the Senior Citizen Building. The management and control of all activities and events are monitored by this committee, in addition the foundation administers and tracks all land owners water lines and annual payments.

***Please make checks payable to: \$52.00 as of May 2020***

**Hog Hammock Community Foundation P O Box 56, Sapelo Island, GA 31327**

The water system seems to be one of the most difficult to control i.e payment collections. The island is of course one of many unique ways of doing things and although you may have never received a late notice as with living on the mainland “Sapelo Water System does not pay for itself” it takes the cooperation of all those, who have residence and/or running water on their property to do their part, as the old saying goes “NOTHING IN LIFE IS FREE” neither is the running water on Sapelo Island, therefore **“IF YOU ARE A LANDOWNER” and have a water connection, PLEASE MAKE YOUR PAYMENT TODAY!**



## Behavior Cemetery



Over the years this Historical Cemetery has been the final resting place for descendants near and far. There is no doubt, as a descendant and you keep up with the changing times, you will hear of the passing of a descendant, no matter how deep the blood line and how long ago they left Sapelo, as the ole' hymn goes "LORD, they are coming home". It is no secret that so many descendants look at Sapelo Island "Behavior Cemetery as their final resting place. One thing, we must all keep in mind, those that are resting below, can't keep the grass from growing up above, therefore it takes the willing hands, hard work and volunteer work all to maintain the cemetery. We are thankful for the past years of all men and women, who put forth the effort and took time out to do their part, such committed grass cutters like Dea. William Banks and Dea. Tracy Walker and currently Mike Grovner Sr, Marvin Grovner Sr, Lewis Jackson & Joel Hillery. In April 2019 the community held one of the largest clean ups organized by Lila Hillery and Lewis Jackson. We have been blessed with descendants, who have contributed generously to the cemetery improvement with equipment and lumber to assist with ground maintenance and additional upgrade to the storage shed for equipment storage. Thank you to Allen Bailey, Richard Banks, and Larry Johnson. The cemetery is currently in need of new fencing and this can't wait, therefore if you would like to know, how you can assist with any areas of the Behavior Cemetery, please don't hesitate to inquire. (GET INVOLVED)

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### ***Sapelo Island DNR Management Division***

We are excited to launch our new email address for ferry passenger requests! [Sapelo.ferry@dnr.ga.gov](mailto:Sapelo.ferry@dnr.ga.gov) is now accepting ferry requests from residents, landowners, UGAMI and DNR. Just send an email with your request form attached! You'll receive a confirmation reply and if there are any issues we'll call/email with follow-up. Request forms can also be faxed, mailed, or dropped off at Long Tabby. If you have any questions, please call the office. Remember to submit requests 2 working days in advance for groups less than 10 and 2-week prior for groups over 10. Nikki will be monitoring this account and it should make the process smoother! Thank you!

A big WELCOME to Tamarah Mills who has started working at the Sapelo Island Visitors Center! She is a 2018 Honor Graduate of McIntosh County Academy and has a son named Kashton. Tamarah was raised on Sapelo Island and is the daughter of Aaron and Cynthia Walker. Tamarah, in her free time, likes to cook, bake, shop, and spend time with her son. She will be working along with Bill and Stacy at the Visitors Center. Stop in and welcome her!

Sapelo Island DNR management Division (continued)

### ***Marsh Landing Dock Update:***



The new covered pavilion at Marsh Landing is nearly complete. It will have a metal roof and the electricians are about to install the conduit for lighting and various outlets. Several more loads of concrete will be needed to complete the fixed decks and the bulkheads that are being repaired as part of the project. The new floats have been delivered and are staged in Hudson Creek across from the Meridian Dock. The largest of the floats weighs in at just under 60,000 pounds and was loaded using a large crane brought in from Jesup, GA. Crescent Equipment has completed the new 8'x 80' aluminum ramp and it will be brought to the site once the concrete fixed decks are completed and the floats are installed. The project is moving forward and completion is expected to be around the end of August.

### **New Deckhand, Parker Smith:**

Please welcome Parker Smith as the newest member of the ferry crew! Parker is from McIntosh County and has been on the ferry now for a few months. He's an avid fisherman and you may have already seen him at Salt Pond, Cabretta, Barn Creek, etc., etc.! Parker is learning everyone's names but be sure to introduce yourself and help him as he learns the ropes!

### **Katie Underwood Update:**

The Katie Underwood is still in Thunderbolt but the new door for the main passenger cabin should be installed this week and then she can return to Sapelo. The new cabin door is essentially flat at the bottom and should make entering/leaving the cabin easier for passengers. Her engines have been serviced, shafts and cutlass bearings replaced, wheels swapped out, and a fresh coat of paint on the bottom. Please remember that masks are still required on the ferry and will be required until the USCG issues new guidance. We are also still limited to 75 passengers per run so be sure to submit passenger requests as soon as you know that you have guests needing a ride.

***We may have different religions, different languages, different colored skin, but we all belong to one human race.***



## **"UNITY IN THE COMMUNITY"**

*"A thought to PONDER"*

*"A key to knowing if WE are getting anywhere, is to know, where WE came from."*



**JUNETEENTH**

# **LET US CELEBRATE COMMUNITY for Juneteenth (June 19, 2021)**

**(Father's Day Weekend) Bring the Family HOME**

*JUNETEENTH is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States*

*Volunteers needed "PLEASE contact" if you would like to be a part!*

*Grilling, Music, Laughter*

*WE CAN DO THIS "Let US put the Spirit of Sapelo BACK into Sapelo*

*Contact: Karen (912) 270-3154 or text*

**LET US HEAR FROM YOU**

**Email your comments and/or news**

**PLEASE submit your feedback, news and/or articles by May 20, 2021**

Is there something on Sapelo Island, that you would like to see happen to focus Unity in the Community?



What is the GRIOT (you should ask)? *A griot is a West African storyteller, singer, musician, and oral historian. They train to excel as orators, lyricists and musicians. The griot keeps records of all the births, deaths, marriages through the generations of the village or family.*

The Griot was once a published newsletter started back years ago by SICARS, following the traditions of our past, we decided to turn the paper trail into our voices. The newsletter served as a great communication between island residents, along with descendants on the mainland. There has been so much as to who, what, when and why, that it seems no more than right to once, again let's start the line of communication. It may seem as though some would ask, why would we need a newsletter, within such a small community but as time moves on and the world around us changes, **communication is a must**, therefore we call and/or text on a daily basis but when it comes down to the real thing, there is nothing better than having that hard copy of information right there in front of us.

This newsletter, we should hope will be one, that eventually many will come to enjoy and develop, the hype of not being able to wait on the next edition (we hope that this will be your thinking)

#### Contact Information

SICARS website: [sapeloislandga.org](http://sapeloislandga.org)

Email [sicars912@gmail.com](mailto:sicars912@gmail.com)

**DON'T FORGET**

**Membership (support SICARS)**

***GRIOT deadline for ALL items May 20, 2021***



# New Sapelo Island Cultural & Revitalization Society (SICARS)

## Individual Annual Membership Application

*Families and couples require separate forms for each member*

*SICARS, P.O. Box 6, Sapelo Island, GA 31327*

*(912) 485-2197*

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE/FAX: \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_  
**SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_

### MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES: (please make appropriate selection)

Descendant Membership: Open to descendants, and their spouses who have genealogical ties to one or more of the original 44 African-American families of Sapelo Island as identified in the DNR Genealogy and/or other documented sources.

\$25 per year/person

\$500 Lifetime Member (may pay installments, if completed in 12 months)

Paid in full

Installments

Name of Sapelo Island family or families from which you descend: \_\_\_\_\_

Associate Membership: Open to anyone interested in SICARS's mission. Associate members do not have voting rights but are welcome to attend all meetings and to participate in committees, events, and initiatives.

\$15 per year/person

Organization Member: (annual)

\$50 Annual:

Contact person within organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Corporate Member: (annual)

\$100 Annual:

Contact person within company: \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

PAYMENT DUE: \_\_\_\_\_

Payable By:  Check/Money Order made payable to SICARS P.O. Box 6, Sapelo Island, GA 31327  
\_\_\_\_\_ Check Number

*Other accepted Payable Methods: Available via SICARS Website*

<http://www.sapeloislandga.org>

**SPECIAL DONATION (tax-deductible) Amount: \$**

**\*Please consider donating to fund projects that support and preserve this historic community.**