

THE GRIOT

THE SAPELO ISLAND CULTURAL AND REVITALIZATION SOCIETY

Summer 2022

Vol. 2



IN THIS ISSUE...

Georgia Heirs Property Law
Center Visit in June

New faces on the island

Learn more about the
SICARS GoFundMe



Cultural Day is Back!

Come join us in celebrating the 24th Annual Cultural Day! On October 22nd, 2022, Cultural Day will return to Sapelo Island after being put on pause since 2019. The SICARS office is excited to bring back this festival celebrating Saltwater Geechee culture, and hope you join us. The festival will feature a variety of vendors, entertainers, arts & crafts, and foods. You'll also enjoy guided island tours and meet and greets with various islanders.

Tickets are on sale now. Either visit www.sicars.org to purchase your tickets online, or call the SICARS office at (912) 485-2197 to learn how to get tickets mailed to you. We're also looking for more vendors and entertainers. If you have foods, merchandise, or performances you'd like to share at Cultural Day, call the SICARS office at (912) 485-2197 or email us at sapeloculturalday@sicars.org.

EDITOR'S NOTE

I would like to start off by saying that usually I am in the "behind the scenes" when it comes to the GRIOT, but unfortunately I have been told that the readers would like to hear a word from me. Therefore, on behalf of all SICARS Board members, Office Staff, active members "get ready".

SICARS office and Board members have been as one can truly attest to "busy." We look forward and will continue to seek the input from our Sapelo Island Descendants and visitors as to your concerns, ideas and in addition, what you would like to see more of from the newsletter. This year came in with a bang and SICARS has already accomplished celebration on the island of our Second Annual Black History month this past February and our Second Juneteenth celebration in June. Now we are gearing up for what has been missing for so long: Cultural Day 2022. As many of you know, it has been some years since this event was put on, therefore we are working with over half of new faces coming on the scene.

We are actively seeking Patrons, Sponsors, talents of tasty kitchens, crafty arts and of course, volunteers. Please contact SICARS office ASAP to register, and for forms and payments completed prior to Cultural Day, October 22, 2022.

In conclusion, we would like to thank all ongoing supporters and visitors who have stopped by and visited with our office staff, wherein Hannah will continue to be on staff currently but it needs to be noted that the two staff members were products of Sapelo Island Descendant lineage. We have been graciously blessed with two "Sapelo Island descendants," Kris Smith & Lauren October, which both have returned to their homes. Kris will be returning to college and Lauren will begin college this fall. Descendants need to know that it really stands out when we can proudly display the well-educated mind of our people.

It was once said and still stands in saying, "it took a village to raise a child", well on that note, it takes UNITY of ALL, to RISE up and be heard.... give your input, your notice and take let us hear from you. Through the GRIOT (NEXT EDITION).

Karen Grovner-Hillery, SICARS VP
SICARS Multipurpose Office Manager

NEW FACES

Kris Smith interns with SICARS

This summer, SICARS has introduced a new intern through the SICARS/SINERR partnership. We were happy to invite Kris Smith as the new intern for SICARS.

Kris is about to enter her third year of studying architecture at Tulane University. She is also a descendant of the Johnson family. Kris was interested in working with SICARS because she wanted to learn more about her heritage on the island. She's been visiting the island since she was a child, but wanted to do more for the community, and saw the opportunity as a way to get involved in the Hog Hummock community as well as help with projects that would help the community.



Kris has been helpful in assisting with graphic designs and marketing materials, as well as helping run the SICARS social media pages.



NEWS & UPDATES

Reflection on Georgia Heir's Property Law Center Visit

This summer saw the conclusion of the Heir's Property Estate Planning services. In late 2021, the Georgia Heirs Property Law Center hosted a series of workshops educating residents and descendants on heirs property. In the following months they worked with several families to do estate planning for their last will and testament. This process concluded on June 11th, 2022, with the lawyers of the law center taking a weekend visit to the island, and meeting with 10 families to officially sign their last will and testament. We can not overstate our appreciation for their partnership with SICARS for this project. Part of SICARS's mission is to ensure land retention for residents and descendants of Hog Hummock, and the work of the Georgia Heirs Property Law Center helped inform the community of the importance of inheritance and ensure land ownership in the community.

Support the SICARS GoFundMe

In March 2022, SICARS officially launched a GoFundMe campaign. Protecting land ownership is part of SICAR's mission, as land both ties the community not only to the present and to each other, but also to its history and ancestry. The main goal for the funds raised is to meet the Right of First Refusal, and the purchased land will go toward community use. Any excess funds would go toward the preservation of other properties, back tax and legal fund assistance for community members' properties, as well as repairing community buildings as needed. We are currently trying to raise \$200,000 to achieve this goal. While we are aware that this is a lofty amount, we believe in the power of outreach, and believe that with enough consistent support we will be able to meet this goal. We appreciate contributions of any size, and are grateful for every donation. You can make a donation at www.sicars.org or www.gofundme.com/f/help-save-sapelo-island-geechee-land-and-culture

Help SICARS Save Sapelo Geechee Land & Culture



\$3,136 raised of \$400,000 goal

30 donations

Share

Donate now

This fundraiser is located near you

Anonymous

\$20 · 6 d

Rebecca Reynolds

\$100 · 1 mo

Sapelo Island Lawsuit Reaches Settlement

Residents of Sapelo Island recently won a lawsuit against McIntosh County, in which they claimed they were denied adequate and necessary services by the county. Such services they claimed were denied included road service, emergency medical care, schools and education, and law enforcement. Furthermore, residents also claimed the county charged unfair garbage fees and gave residents unjustly high property taxes. The ruling was in favor of the residents, and those involved with the suit received \$750,000. The county will also be introducing new services to the island, including emergency medical truck, an updated firetruck, and increasing the frequency of road maintenance, and garbage fees will be reduced.

Clemson University Architecture Class Visits Sapelo Island

In July we welcomed an architecture class from Clemson University onto the island for site visits of several different locations across Hog Hummock. The students created proposals for projects such as affordable housing units, a business co-operative, a bed and breakfast, a cultural village, and a Boys and Girls club. SICARS President Ron Johnson, along with fellow Hannah Morris and intern Kris Smith showed the group to various locations in the community to highlight the history, culture, and existing architecture of the community. These projects are designed to fit within the scale and architectural language of the more traditional homes of the community. We thank them for joining us and hope they return again soon.



Sapelo Island celebrates Black History Month and Juneteenth

This past February, SICARS hosted a Black History Month Celebration to honor Black History Month, and to bring together descendants and residents in celebration. The event was held on the SICARS grounds, and brought joy with music, games, a raffle, and trivia about black history and historical figures. We would like to thank our volunteers who brought and served food for guests to enjoy, as well as Maurice for volunteering a tour to visitors. We would also like to thank those that came out and celebrated Black History Month with us, as no celebration is complete without company. We had great turnout and had lots of fun with everyone that came. We hope to have you all join us again next year!

On June 18th, the SICARS and Hog Hummock Community Foundation celebrated the second annual Juneteenth event! The event was held at the Hog Hummock Community Grounds, and it was wonderful to see the families come together in celebration of Black freedom. We would like to say thank you to all the volunteers for helping set up and run the event so that everyone could enjoy the holiday, to those who donated food for the community's enjoyment, and also thank you to the vendors for joining us in celebration. We would also like to extend a special thank you to commissioner Roger Lotson for making the time to join us on Juneteenth. We hope to see you all again next year!



FAITH MATTERS

Psalm 79:13 *But we your people, the sheep of your pasture, will give thanks to you forever; from generation to generation we will recount your praise.*

We would like to congratulate St. Luke Baptist Church on celebrating its 138th anniversary! The church was founded in 1884, and celebrated this anniversary on June 12th with a nice turnout of family and fellowship. With thank St. Luke for its many years of bringing the community together to celebrate God.

Services are in person!

St. Luke Baptist services : Wed nights 7pm & 2nd & 4th Sunday morning @ 11am

First African Baptist: 1st and 3rd Sunday morning @ 11am

Fundraising for New Behavior Cemetery Fencing

Generations of Sapelo Island residents have called Behavior Cemetery their final resting place. As such, it is our responsibility as their descendants to maintain this as part of our history, and ensure the longevity and preservation of those who have passed.

A GoFundMe has been created to help fundraise repairing and replacing the fence surrounding Behavior Cemetery. Restoring the fence is important, as it protects generations of past family members from wildlife as well as unwanted visitors

The campaign is being run by Charissa Grovner Younce and is supported by the Hog Hummock community and spearheaded by Mike Grovner and Richard Banks, with help from Lila Hillery, Mike Grovner Sr, Mary Bailey, Randall Garner, and JoeL Hillery Sr. The campaign is asking for \$10,000 to replace the fencing in the cemetery, which would be repaired by Mike Grovner Sr. Donations of any size are greatly appreciate, and can be made at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/behavior-cemetery-fence-fund>



Behavior Cemetery Fence Fund

\$120 raised of \$10,000 goal • 2 donors

Share

Donate now

SICARS

P.O. Box 6

Sapelo Island, GA

31327