

THE GRIOT

NEWSLETTER OF THE SAPELO ISLAND CULTURAL AND REVITALIZATION SOCIETY



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Both Sapelo Island churches celebrate their anniversaries
- Celebrating Juneteenth, Sapelonian Style! See our flyer on page 3 and join the fun!



Descendant Nikki Williams reflects on the love of mullet

"How can you not believe that food is a love language?," Williams says. "That kind of care, patience, and love for one another has been passed down through generations, up and down the Gullah-Geechee corridor."

SICARS and SINERR partner to host a rain barrel workshop

The organizations hope to provide community members with an extra water supply during storms and floods.



Hogg Hummock Artisan Market opens

With African ingenuity and Geechee promise, the Hogg Hummock Artisan Market opened its doors for a soft opening on May 24, 2025. An initiative of the Mystic Roots Foundation, the market is set to provide co-op space for local artisans who want to sell their wares.

"The point of it all," says Mystic Roots Foundation Founder Parthenia Myers, "is collective/cooperative economic development." Myers states that in order for the market to grow as a collective, **See Page 10**

THE GRIOT

NEWSLETTER OF THE SAPELO ISLAND CULTURAL AND REVITALIZATION SOCIETY

Editor's Letter

Embracing all with an Attitude of Gratitude.

SICARS, greeting each day with a special dose of Thankfulness. We realize that not everyday has been "a bowl of cherries" but through it all we are pressing on. The past year has been very busy and we were very heartbroken with the tragedy on 10/19/2024, during our last annual Cultural Day. We continue to express our support and to keep all affected in our prayers, including our community, who helped assist with this tragedy.

SICARS has been making progress in so many ways. Our current Board of Directors are about action, not just talk. We are thankful to have such a diverse group of talent stemming from this board and they are all direct descendants of Sapelo Island. I am quite sure you can see some of the current progress being made down at the Farmers' Alliance Hall, with work being supervised by board member Randall Garner Jr. In addition, our annual events are ongoing with Juneteenth and 2025 Cultural Day coming up, chaired by Board member Cynthia Hillery-Jackson.

It does a body good to see how much can be accomplished, when we choose to not all be chiefs and allow others to give a hand. This only goes to show, how much WE as a People can get done. No man is an island. We all need each other, whether we realize it or not. When we feel or think that we don't need anyone's help, eventually it will take us into isolation, affecting our mental health.

It's so easy to say "What can I help you with?" Someone once demonstrated the effects of unity as to say, imagine the FORCE! In closing, let the upcoming months of 2025 see us getting more unified. Let's position ourselves around discussion tables and understand that 'just because I may not agree with all of your ideas, does not mean we can't compromise. After all, do we not all want the same for our Community and our Heritage?

SICARS VP/ Karen Grovner-Hillery

Sapelo Island Faith Matters

"Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word about Christ."

- Romans 10:17



Services on the Island, All are welcome



First African Baptist Church

Pastor Thomas Blue III

1st Sundays - *In person services*

10 a.m. Sunday School

11 a.m. Worship & Communion Service followed by Fellowship Dinner in the Hall

Weekly Bible Study call in with Rev Thomas Blue III

Thursday at 7:15 am, Friday at 12pm (dial in)

Monday, Wednesday, Friday - Prayer (Dial in 425-436-6320 code 108301#)

3rd Sunday - for any Special Programs (to be announced)

St. Luke Baptist Church

Pastor E. Scott Dixon

Pastor Dixon is a Sapelo Island Descendant

2nd Sundays - *In person services*

10 a.m. Sunday School

11 a.m. Worship & Communion Service, followed by Fellowship Dinner in the Dining Hall

4th Sunday of Every Month via Zoom with Pastor E. Scott Dixon

Meeting ID: 466 453 4909 or

Dial In Conference Line: 425-436-4317 Access Code: 3125791

Wednesday Night Bible Study : Dial in Conference Line Only 605-313-6147

Access Code :681049

Faith Celebrations

May 4, 2025

First African Baptist celebrated their 159th Church Anniversary

June 8, 2025

St. Luke Baptist will be celebrating their Church Anniversary

July 27, 2025

St. Luke Baptist will be celebrating Pastor E. Scott Dixon's Anniversary



Hog Hammock Community Foundation Inc.
PO BOX 14
Sapelo Island, Georgia 31327
Email: hoghammockcom@gmail.com
Website: www.hhcfoundation.net

This notification is to inform you of the ways to take care of your yearly water services. The yearly cost for the water services is \$52.00. Below you will find 3 easy methods to secure your payment

SCAN AND PAY

Sapelo Island Yearly Water Payment



ONLINE PAY

www.hhcfoundation.net/payments



PAY BY CHECK



Mail checks to

**PO BOX 14
SAPELO, ISLAND GA 31327**

Make checks out to

**HOG HAMMOCK COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION INC.**

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, feel free to email us at hoghammockcom@gmail.com. If you see signs of water in yards, along roadsides, fields, or wooded areas where water lines run, please report those to the Long Tabby office at 912-485-2251. If there is a severe leak, you can also contact Fred Hay at 404-985-6831 or Justin Alexander 912-506-8672. We are continuously working to make things better in partnership with all of the members of the Hog Hammock Community.

Richard Banks, President
Hog Hammock Community
Foundation Inc.

Community Rain Barrel Workshop to be held on August 14, 2025

Sapelo Island, GA - The Hogg Hammock Library will be hosting a rain barrel workshop this summer for members of the Sapelo community. Sponsored by SICARS and SINERR, the August 14th workshop will allow attendees the opportunity to build their own rain cisterns. Barrels will be provided to each household participating in the event by the aforementioned organizations as well as the Coastal Research Division, and it's hoped that each one will provide attendees with water for showering and other needs when the regular water supply is not available.

"This workshop isn't just about building a barrel—it's about building resilience," says Brittany Dodge of The Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve (SINERR). "With flooding becoming more frequent on the island," she adds, "every drop (of water) we can capture and slow down makes a difference!" Rain barrels are a small but powerful tool, according to Dodge. "They help keep yards drier, reduce pressure on our drainage systems, and save water for plants during dry spells," she says. Dodge counts this as a win for our homes and for the island. "Everyone on the island has seen firsthand how heavy rains can overwhelm parts of the community," she adds. "This workshop is a hands-on way to take some control back from mother nature and protect what you care about while storing water that can be used for gardening!" If interested in registering for the workshop, email Brittany Dodge at Brittany.dodge@dnr.ga.gov

SUPPORT SICARS THROUGH YOUR DONATIONS

Our organization is dependent upon
donations and external funding.

Please donate today by writing a
check to:

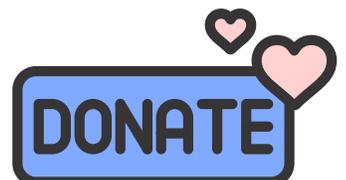
Sapelo Island Cultural and Revitalization Society

P.O. Box 6

Sapelo Island, GA, 31327



We thank you in advance!





Ayden Dunwoody, Mason Bailey and Serenity Lee were baptised on June 7th.

Sapelo Churches celebrate their anniversaries

First African Baptist Church celebrated its 150 year anniversary of continuing service, with its Founders Day Celebration on May 2nd. The message was given by the Reverend Sinclair Thorne of Hinesville. "We were grateful for the attendance and our visitors first time and returning," says Karen Hillery, a church member. "A blessed time was had by all," she added. "We pray our richest blessings over all and appreciate everything presented that day."

In addition, three youth were presented as candidates for baptism by First A.B. on June 7th, at Nanny Goat Beach. Their names are Ayden Dunwoody, Mason Bailey and Serenity Lee.

St. Luke Baptist Church celebrated its anniversary on June 8th, with a church service and fellowship lunch. The guest church was 1st Calvary Baptist Church of Hinesville, and the guest pastor was Rev. Sinclair Thorne.

For the love of mullet

By Nikki Williams



I say that food is my love language all the time. Usually, it's a joke—but when I really think about it, food truly is a love language. I'm not talking about food that comes in a greasy bag from a drive-thru (though that's appreciated). I mean the kind of food that takes time, intention, and love. The kind of food that carries stories. The foods rooted in Gullah-Geechee heritage hold a special place in my heart.

When I was younger, coming over to Sapelo for the weekend with my grandparents and sisters, the thing I looked forward to most—besides playing with cousins and going to the beach—was the food. There was always a feast laid out: perfectly grilled ribs, golden fried chicken, collards, red rice, white rice, green beans, cornbread, and homemade pies and cakes. It was all delicious! But my one favorite then—and still today—is smoked mullet. Seeing all those fish laid out on the grill, smelling the smoke in the air—made my mouth water instantly.

Smoked mullet wasn't done regularly, so when it was on the menu, it was a treat. Only recently did I learn how much effort went into preparing one of my favorite foods. First, you need the mullet! Throwing a net to catch enough to feed everyone—because like many meals, it's a community event—can take hours, sometimes days. Once you have enough, you must clean and wash them. Then the mullet need to soak. After that, they are salted and left to sit to draw the moisture out.

Then you need fire. That means chopping live oak and preparing the grill. Once the fire is started in a pile, tin is put up around the grill to block the wind and the wood is spread out. The grill gets greased so the fish don't stick, and the fish are put skin-side down. Then you wait. That's when the stories start, the laughter flows, and maybe a few mullet that didn't make the grill get fried and eaten with some buttery grits. When the fish turn white, they get flipped. And once the mullet get that beautiful brown color—it's time to eat! But not before plates are made for the elderly and the sick.

When you hear all that goes into it—how can you not believe that food is a love language? That kind of care, patience, and love for one another has been passed down through generations, up and down the Gullah-Geechee corridor. It continues on Sapelo still.





Fresh food and artisan items for sale at the Hogg Hummock Artisan Market on Sapelo.

Market, Cont'd

We wanted to have a place for descendants to sell their items so that we can promote economic development on Sapelo Island," Myers says. "It's important for us to work together in order to survive and grow. The more we work together, the better off we will be," she says. Myers adds that with the soft opening, she's hoping to get the word out on the island about the market and to share a little bit of her vision with others. "There's more space," she says, waving an arm around the store. "See, all this space available for descendants to sell their products."

The market sells arts & crafts, sweetgrass baskets, tee shirts, books, bags, loose leaf herbs, salves, oils and other herbal products made by Myers in her apothecary. There is also Ethiopian coffee and produce grown by island famers, such as peppers, eggplant, squash and tomatoes. The Artisan Market sources vegetables from the Heritage Farm, located on the Island, with plans to partner with other local farmers in the future to increase the amount of produce available for the community. Right now, Myers says, she's looking at keeping the market open primarily on Saturdays, though she may expand hours in the future. "I'm thinking a weekly offering," she adds.

The most amazing thing about opening the market according to Myers is the continued entrepreneurial spirit that the effort has tapped into. "We're in Mr. Hall's General Store, established in 1920, which was a staple in the community. Here we are 105 years later, embracing the same entrepreneurial spirit of our ancestors. We're leaning into that rich legacy as we move forward." The concept for the market has been in development for a couple of years, but the restoration of the building only took a few months. "We're grateful for the space, and we're very clear on the vision and we are looking forward to its growth," Myers adds. So far so good, she says of the opening, with a mixture of descendants and visitors visiting the market during their time on the island.

For more information about the Hogg Hummock Artisan Market, email Parthenia Myers at [**hogghummockartisanmarket@gmail.com**](mailto:hogghummockartisanmarket@gmail.com)



Behavior Cemetery

Somewhere to lay my head

"How long do you hold your opinions?" comes from 1 Kings 18:21, where the prophet Elijah asks the Israelites how long they will hesitate between following the Lord of Baal. Elijah challenges them to make a choice, emphasizing the need for commitment to God.

How Long will it take for WE, the descendants, to take action?

Hats off to the Grounds Committee with the Behavior Cemetery Project. It needs to be said and noticed that the grounds and works of the barrier fencing did not pop up like magic. This ground crew has worked hard to get this far. Again, if you have not noticed the good works, please do. We continue to lay our loved ones to rest but as we have looked around the area, we have noticed that we are running out of space. Additional areas need to be cleared.

With this being said, please note that the fencing project is not completed, therefore it is time for us to move. I have heard of so many, who come home to bury their loved ones, and who clean and cut the lawn, but we must come together to care for and expand the cemetery. Funding is still needed to complete this project. In addition, the equipment used to keep grounds clean do not run on air...fuel is costly. We are calling on all descendants, let us move on this, with the churches being the governing body, we are asking and seeking your assistance. That being said, how long will it take for us to notice that we are running out of space, we must work together! Let us come together and reason.

Proposed Action (must have support of the churches)

Tentative Date for Discussion Meeting July 19, 2025 @ 10am (Place TBA)

To form a Committee of Descendants to put guidelines in order. We need both churches on the island to appoint at least 2 individuals to work on a committee to put in place guidelines for burial and additional projects for this Historical Site, in addition the representatives will be able to communicate back to the churches. "Tomorrow is not promised, and the past cannot be changed; therefore, live each day to the fullest and know that every new day is a blessing."

CONTACT with additional comments /suggestions/ideas:

DIRECT Descendant
Karen Grovner-Hillery
2hillerys1207@gmail.com

THE GRIOT NEEDS YOUR INPUT!

We are looking for:

**ANNIVERSARIES
BIRTHDAYS
WEDDINGS
GRADUATIONS
MILESTONES**

TO INCLUDE IN OUR SEPTEMBER 1ST NEWSLETTER



PLEASE CALL SICARS AT 912-485-2197
OR EMAIL AFURNESS@SICARS.ORG
WITH YOUR INFORMATION

STAY CONNECTED TO THE CULTURE!