Ossabaw Oracle

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A publication of the Ossabaw Island Foundation

Friends of Ossabaw Day—Saturday, October 7

As we had such a wonderful response to our June outing, we are offering another Friends of Ossabaw day trip on Saturday, October 7.

If you have ever wondered about Ossabaw or wanted to visit, we invite you to join us.

For those willing to venture by pontoon boat, buckboard and on foot, you will see the place where the arts and sciences meet history and nature.

If your membership has expired we hope you will renew your membership.

If you are not a member, we hope you will join and become a Friend of Ossabaw.

If you are currently a member we hope you will take advantage of this special day.

Friends of Ossabaw Day—Details

DATE: Saturday October 7

COST: $50 per person Friends of Ossabaw
$65 per person for Future Friends

- This cost covers roundtrip boat transportation and full day tour.
- **You will need to bring your own sack lunch and beverage.**

TIME: Depart Delegal Marina at The Landings promptly at 9:30 a.m. and returns around 4 p.m.

Space is limited to 30 people.
Payment in full is required to confirm reservations.

For more information or to reserve space, contact Jim Bitler, On Island Coordinator @ 912.210.1613.

For information about joining or renewing your membership, contact Elizabeth DuBose, Executive Director of the Ossabaw Island Foundation, 912.233.5104.

Save the Date!

Pig Roast and Art Auction
Saturday October 21, 2006

Congratulations

...to Mrs. West for receiving a commendation at the 2006 Gender and Women's Studies Program's conference entitled "Realizing Women's Leadership: the Art of the Possible."
In realizing the first State Heritage Preserve in the State of Georgia and her stewardship of Ossabaw Island, Armstrong Atlantic State University president Tom Jones presented the commendation, stating: "I salute Eleanor Torrey West for her generous accomplishment. She has quietly and firmly led the State of Georgia into an educational adventure in which we can all take pride."
Mrs. West commented that “most honors have been for conservation, but this one was for educational ideas and leadership, which is why I was so excited to receive it.”

Boarding House Construction Date Confirmed

...and it’s older than we thought! While reconstructing the porch on the Boarding House, David Stroud, Mark Frissell and Trey Coursey found marks left by the original builders dating the house to 1918. The porch was under construction in March of 1918 as indicated by the evidence of pencil marks, signatures and notes left for posterity.

The Barrier Islands of Georgia: Considering the Future

On May 15, 2006, the Ossabaw Island Education Alliance coordinated a meeting of the owners and managers of Georgia’s barrier islands, hosted on St. Catherine’s Island. This was the first time this group has met since 1967.

The group met to discuss the challenges and threats Georgia’s barrier islands face, and how, collectively, the issues might be addressed. Meeting moderators Richard Milford, Jim Kundell, and Langford Holbrook from the Carl Vinson Institute of Government and the Fanning Institute of the University of Georgia helped make the day a success.

Be Inspired — A Call for Artists

The Ossabaw Island Foundation is inviting artists to experience Ossabaw Island and capture that inspiration in their artwork. The Foundation is offering day and overnight trips to Ossabaw for creative stimulation.

The island adventure includes transportation to the island by boat, an overview of Ossabaw’s natural and built environment, and transportation around the island. Trips are available throughout the months of August and September. Visit for one day or several, or stay in the Club House overnight. The bedrooms even have air conditioning!

Turned walnut vase with Ossabaw pig tusks Mark Frissell, 2005

In return for your adventure on Ossabaw, we ask that you donate at least one finished piece of work (framed if applicable) generated from your island visit to the Art Auction held during the annual Pig Roast on Saturday, October 21.

The proceeds of this sale benefit the Torrey-West Furniture and Art Fund. In addition we hope you will attend the Pig Roast as our guest and provide a personal perspective of your work and experience on Ossabaw Island.

If you are interested, please contact our On-Island Coordinator Jim Bitler 912-210-1613, and leave a message.

Pin Point Residents Come "Home" to Ossabaw Island

A group of seventeen people from Pin Point, Savannah and Atlanta came out to Ossabaw on Saturday, June 3, 2006 to spend the day as guests of the Foundation.

Six of the group had grown up as children in the tabbies in the 1940s. With their families, they rendezvoused at Pin Point, caravanned to Delegal Marina, and arrived on Ossabaw Island, laughing and talking, bringing an incredible array of food, loaded down with cameras and video equipment. They were ready to tell stories about each other and about the island.

Six visitors who grew up on the island returned for a visit, and shared many stories.

The day's program called for a quick stop at the Clubhouse, a walking tour of the tabby cabins, a trip to Middle Place for lunch, and then on to the Main House to meet with Sandy West.

While meeting with Mrs. West, stories and laughter flowed. One former resident said, "Mrs. West, I have been asking the Lord to let me come to Ossabaw just one more time." Sandy responded, "Well, you've been asking the wrong person. You shouldn't talk to the Lord. You should talk to me!" One local former resident, remarking to another former resident who had made the trip from Atlanta, said, "Morris, we are home – at long last, after all these years!"

Frankly, the lives they remembered there – with limited electricity and plumbing, kerosene lamps and lack of electric refrigeration – was not too far distant from that in the nineteenth century.

Some of the remarkable stories include:

One man who spent his first five years there, from 1941 to 1946, recalled ice pits behind the tabbies. The pits were dug some seven feet into the ground and one-hundred pound blocks of ice were dropped into them. This was the only way to keep food fresh because there were no electric refrigerators. Every two weeks, a boat delivered fresh blocks of ice.

The six people who had lived in the tabbies as children describe conditions that were basic at best: one of the houses had only shutters instead of the glass windows and all had only limited island-generated electricity. But it was an idyllic life nonetheless.

Mothers would set out tubs during the day to heat up water under the sun and bathe them at night. They recalled the peach tree behind the boarding house, the fig tree (today only a small part of the tree remains) and the grand scuppernong vine near the Clubhouse from which they all harvested fruit.

There were no fences around the field facing the tabbies, and a bad bull would chase them around that field. They would sit out at night and watch the deer come out.

They washed clothes in rainwater. They made their own soap. It was lye soap, made from killing hogs and using balls of fat, with potash mixed in. Sometimes, they made "Indian soap" from a special plant, a "soap" tree. The indigo plant at the Clubhouse reminded one participant of the soap tree, but the leaves of the tree were longer than those of the indigo plant.

During the 1940s, Mr. Stauffer was the English "overseer". He was responsible for the island when the Torreys were not there. Then there was Captain Boyd and his wife Grace, who lived in the boarding house.

Next to the smokehouse was the "oyster factory", now torn down. The smokehouse was an "ice house" with a large refrigerator unit inside.

They remembered drying shrimp and fish on top of the tabbies, as well as hanging out alligator hides to dry on racks or trees nearby. The alligator hides were taken down to Broughton Street to Jack Bryant's store. He sold them to someone in New York. There were other dealers on St. Julian Street.

There were lots of stories of moonshining operations on island. The way you could tell whether someone was a moonshiner was to look at the engine on his boat. An old Johnson motor held together by wire meant a fisherman. A new Johnson engine, shiny and glistening, meant a moonshiner.

Thanks to all who participated and made this memorable day possible, particularly Sharron Wingster, Mike Neal of Bull River Cruises, Paul Pressly of the Education Alliance and Mrs. West.

The former residents brought family members to share the sights and sounds of their childhood.

The Ossabaw Gift Shop

T-shirts feature Craig Rubadoux's Ossabaw animals on the front and a map of the Georgia Coast on back. Short or long sleeved, dark green shirt/beige printing.

Books include *Evocations of an Island* hardcover book, by Jack Leigh, Alan Campbell and James Kilgo, as well as boxed note cards featuring four different images from the book, (8 cards total, with 2 cards each image). Also, Ann Foskey's *Images of America: Ossabaw Island,* and now, *The God of the Hinge, Sojourns in Cloud Cuckoo Land* by Elizabeth Pool and Eleanor West. We also offer prints of William Armstrong's painting of Bradley Beach.

Please send ___ copy(ies) of *God of the Hinge* @ $16.95 _____
Please send ___ copy(ies) of *Evocations* @ $29.95 _____
Please send ___ copy(ies) of *Images of America* @ $20 _____
Please send ___ box(es) of *Evocations* Notecards @ $10 _____
Please send ___ copy(ies) of Bradley Beach poster @ $20 _____
Please send ___ Short-sleeved T-shirt, S M L XL @ $15 _____
Please send ___ Long-sleeved T-shirt, S M L XL @ 20 _____

Enclose $5 for US postage and handling. $ 5.00

Total Order: _____

❑ My check/money order is enclosed

❑ Please charge to
o MasterCard o VISA
o Discover o American Express

Acct #:_____ Exp: _____

Signature: _____

Daytime Phone (required) (_____) _____-_____

Send order to:

Name: _____

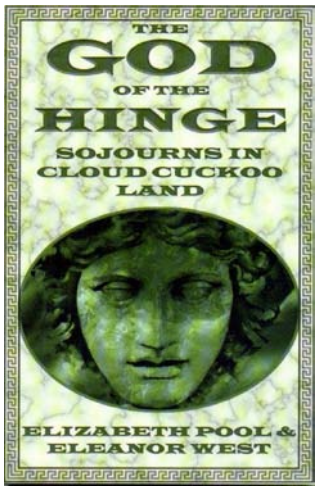
Address: _____

_____

Send completed form to:

The Ossabaw Island Foundation
145 Bull Street
Savannah, GA 31401

Book Review: God of the Hinge



The thought of meeting a Hellenic hero never occurred to Sandy and Rusty until a chain of signs and cleverly cryptic messages leads them to discover the truth: they are in divine company. Friends from the moment they meet, just before Sandy marries Rusty's brother, the two women begin a tradition of girls-only trips to often exotic locales. On each journey, they are inevitably drawn into adventures, misadventures and treasure hunts choreographed by the mischievous entity seeking to reveal his identity.

In the form of a letter to Sandy's granddaughter, *God of the Hinge: Sojourns in Cloud Cuckoo Land* provides a tag-team account of Elizabeth "Rusty" Pool's and Eleanor "Sandy" West's lifelong friendship and enlightenment—and divine intervention straight from mythical Mount Olympus.

Jimmy Carter calls the book "an intriguing account of two debutantes who, for more than 70 years have shared delightful adventures, heavily influenced and inspired by nature, mythology and imagination"

Congratulations to Eleanor Torrey West and Elizabeth Pool, joint authors of the newly released book published by Harbor House printing. The Ossabaw Island Foundation is pleased to offer this as the newest addition to our book store. Order your copy today!

Friends of Ossabaw *May—June, 2006*

Friends ($20-$99)

A gift in honor of Mrs. West from Carmela Aliffi

A donation to celebrate and recognize the marriage of Susan Laney and Frank Ellsworth from Jane Fishman and Carmela Aliffi

A gift in memory of Aviator Allen D. Clark from his parents Anne and Thomas Schwingle

Joanne M. Sharpe

Lucky the Ossabaw Pig ($100-$499)

Dr. Edward DiPreta
Jim & Dodie Sanders

The Rock Group

Dr. Claudia Melear and the University of Tennessee Science Education Students join Ossabaw's distinguished rock group on the Club House porch.

You too can "join the band" by purchasing a rocker in the amount of $300

Contributions to the Ossabaw Island Foundation, a 501-c-3 not-for-profit corporation, are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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Note from the Chair

TOIF continues in its efforts to connect--on and through Ossabaw Island--with the rich history of Ossabaw Island, with its value now, and with its potential for learning, research and creative endeavors. I hope you share our excitement that we were able to bring residents of Pin Point back to Ossabaw where they had lived and worked. Paul Pressley's story about the meeting with Sandy West gave me goose bumps! I can't wait to see the video that will be made documenting this historic day. We look forward to the day when the tabbies are fully renovated and we can demonstrate some of the history of those who lived in those structures for over 150 years.

TOIF is proud to announce that we have completed fund-raising for the Boarding House, initially built in 1918 as the home for the island superintendent, and renovation of that structure is well underway. When it is finished in 2007, the Boarding House will provide much-need housing for our indefatigable on-island coordinator Jim Bitler, as well as additional bed space for artists, scientists and teachers.

TOIF could not have accomplished this task without the Raymond M. Cash Foundation, which provided a challenge grant that sparked completion of the fund-raising. Many thanks to all those who contributed to the Boarding House, including the Chatham Foundation, the Courtney Knight Gaines Foundation, Cornelia Groves, William B. & Leslie Hodges Fund, the Board of Regents, Georgia Department of Natural Resources Heritage 2000 Grant, Tim Coy, Chris Knight, Zelda Tenenbaum, Mr. and Mrs. Randolph W. Thrower, William Haile, Eric Cash, and Roy Richards in honor of his mother Alice.

If you haven't visited Ossabaw lately (or ever), I encourage you to sign up for one of our day trips. Or plan to attend the annual Pig Roast, held this year on October 21. This is always a great party, and you can buy magnificent Ossabaw art works at the silent auction. We thank you for your continuing interest and support and hope to see you at the Pig Roast.

Patricia Barmeyer

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