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August 26, 1982

UPDATE FROM JOHN S. CROWLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Summer Program: The summer youth education and employment program has finished it's third season. The emphasis of the program this year has been individual skills development and agriculture. Students worked in the Star community garden and greenhouses, assisted in the building of a park for young children at the church, and worked to improve writing, reading, interpersonal and group communication, and safe automobile operation skills.

Dana Leighton and Debbie Murphy, this years program leaders, are preparing a more extensive report on the summer program which will be published in the Peaks Island STAR and the Star Foundation newsletter this fall.

Battery Steel Progress: Bath Industrial Sales with the assistance of Scott Sheills and John Crowley made available to the Foundation a tractor with mowing and rototiller attachments for the weekend of August 20th. Dana Leighton, Debbie Murphy and John Crowley spent the weekend tilling additional acreage in order to expand the community/cooperative garden program next season, and mowing acres that were cleared last summer. A number of people have suggested we plant flower bulbs throughout the property as well as concentrated areas for enjoyment by visitors, donations to senior citizens, church and community centers and, for sale to folks who wish for fresh cut flowers on their kitchen tables but haven't the time to garden.

An additional number of picnic tables have been suggested so that more families could enjoy the natural beauty of Battery Steel for picnics and relaxing as well as hiking. Tables might be located near the cooperative gardens and on top of the bunker. They would be put out in mid-May and returned to storage in the bunker in late September.

Battery Steel Erosion Control Plan: For the past three years we have seen an increase in the number of four-wheel drive vehicles and motorcycles traversing the delicate wetlands between Battery Steel and Seashore Avenue, as well as on the Battery itself. Because of particularly heavy rains this past June the damage to the marsh and Battery caused by such activity has been exasperated. The Star Foundation and many neighboring property owners in the back shore area are concerned about the resultant damage and on-going erosion caused to both public and private property by recreational type vehicles. In hopes of minimizing and eliminating the flow of traffic through this delicate ecosystem, Star Foundation is working with abutting back shore property owners and the city D.P.W. The Foundation plans to install barriers at 4 or 5 key access points to prevent vehicles from ascending the Battery itself and entering the parkland area from Star's property. It has been pointed out that a number of small private brush piles in the back shore area have become 'public' dumping sites. The Foundation is looking into the possibility of getting a chipper for a few days this fall to help
reduce this hazard. Specifically, a brush pile at the Battery will be chipped and the balance buried and planted this fall to reduce the desire to dump brush on what was viewed by the Foundation as a temporary site. Others interested in using the chipper may do so for a small contribution to defray the cost of bringing it to the island and rental. Contact Dana Leighton or John Crowley.

A greenhouse winterization work weekend is being planned for October to prepare the prototype greenhouses for winter use. The greenhouses will be under the direction of Debbie Murphy and Dana Leighton. People interested in growing plants, herbs and vegetables in the greenhouses this winter should contact Debbie or Dana. The greenhouses will also enable those islanders who participate in the winter greenhouse project to get seedlings started early (March) which can then be transferred outside after the last frost. The purpose of the greenhouses is to extend the island growing season by a couple of months in the spring and fall. The Foundation has detailed plans, inexpensive glass and technical assistance for families interested in building a greenhouse to extend their growing season. Contact Dana Leighton or John Crowley for information.

Fall Film Series: For the past three years that I have been coming to Peaks Island I’ve often wondered why there is not a regular film series in the evenings somewhere on the island, say the school, church or community center. I have asked people this question and the most common remark is that its a great idea but no one has put all the pieces together, i.e. source of films, location, projector. Another comment that people have made to me, which implicitly connotes a film series could be popular, is the current inconvenience of going into Portland for an evening film.

Over the past few months I have been exploring the various pieces that must be put in place to have a film series. I have found a good source for films, a 16mm projector and a person interested in running the series. The next step is to find a place to offer this series and select the films. I have procured a catalogue of available films and hope people here today will indicate their preferences. The intent is to show a combination of entertainment and relevant educational films. A donation will be requested to cover postage and provide compensation for the film series director.

During the next few weeks I hope we can select the films for the fall series, establish dates for showing and a location. If you have any helpful ideas, comments, criticisms or would like to help carry out the program, please contact John Crowley, Debbie Murphy or Dana Leighton.

Resource Recovery and Recycling: I recently learned that in 2 years the Peaks Island dump will be permanently closed, and already the D.P.W. is trucking trash from the island to a landfill outside of Portland. Because the dump is only open twice a week a number of new 'illegal' dumping areas have begun to appear. We cannot help but think the situation will get worse over the next few years. The Foundation is interested in studying alternative options to open dumping, illegal dumping and the expensive hauling of trash to the mainland which will undoubtedly affect our tax base at some future time. We have begun to scratch the surface by learning what other communities are doing, what the city is planning in the future and what citizens on the island are thinking about future waste disposal options. There are a range of alternatives that be considered ranging from a soil building program that would utilize brush, grass cuttings and biodegradable materials, to a recycling program.
or small resource recovery unit that could produce fuel for an island greenhouse agri/aqua culture cooperative. The Foundation would like to take the lead in organizing a study group comprised of interested citizens, professionals and organizations to begin examining the problem and explore feasible options. The objective of the group would be to identify economical and ecological sound alternatives to island solid waste disposal that are compatible with the majority of resident needs. Please contact John Crowley if you are interested in participating or would like more information.

Star Foundation is a membership organization which gains its strength and direction from dedicated members. It is the Foundation's intent to involve a greater number of Maine and Casco Bay Island residents in our activities. During the next year the Foundation will be working on a number of projects in New England, Washington and southern Maine in addition to those outlined in this update.

Projects currently in the planning and development stages are:
- Year-Between Educational Experience (YBEE), Portland area
- Intergenerational Learning Program, Portland, Boston, Washington, D.C.
- Central Utility Waste Heat Utilization, southern Maine
- Peddocks Island Trust - Renewable Energy Education Facility in the Boston Harbor Islands, Boston
- Glen Echo National Park YBEE, pilot program
- Summer Performing Arts Program, Portland area, based on such models as Wolftrap and Tanglewood

I recently came across two very stimulating statements that in closing I would like to pass on for you to read, contemplate and reflect in hopes the message will carry with you as it has me.

"I was thinking that TV cameras are making us see only things kind of far away, and I was thinking that magazines are making us hear things only if they've been written down by someone we don't know, and I was thinking that newspapers are making us value only people we haven't met, so I started thinking we should start writing, drawing, painting, singing, shouting what we notice about the neighborhood right here to each other every day and maybe it will help us start to learn to treasure what we can also touch". The Rising Sun Neighborhood Newsletter

"There is no energy more powerful on earth than human imagination if we only have the vision to see beyond ourselves, and the wisdom to communicate well".