



Pine Island Knots

Newsletter of the Pine Island Preservation Society
Number 54
June 2026

PIPS Board Members Tour Historic Beaufort and Dataw Island, SC

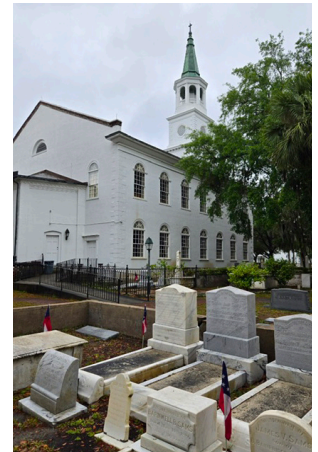
Members of our Pine Island Preservation Society Board and families went on an excursion to Beaufort and Dataw Island, SC for a visit to the area where the original Sams families migrated from in the late 1870s.

It was a quick weekend trip the 1st of May and all stayed at a lodging in Beaufort, SC. Teresa Bridges, a Sams family descendent who visits the Sams House in Florida and participates in our Pioneer Day events was the host and historical tour director. She is extremely familiar with that area and an avid history expert. She and cousin Mandy Winters also hosted a delicious luncheon at a Villa on Dataw Island. Joe and Diane Roney, historians with Dataw Historical Foundation, provided the group with a special presentation in the Dataw museum.

Saturday was a drizzly day, but it didn't stop the tour of Beaufort with its southern mansions, historic cemeteries, and historic ruins of the Dataw Island where many of the Sams families had plantations of cotton, indigo and sugar cane. Sunday several attended a service in the historic St. Helens Anglican church before heading to Florida.

Everyone was overwhelmed with the beauty of the area and the vast history of the Sams and other pioneer families being shared by our hosts.

PIPS Board Members who took part were: Rick and Nancy English; Martha Pessaro; Josie and Mike Neal, and Rob and Beth Neal; Diane and Rick Stees; Darleen and Jerry Hunt, and Shannah Trout.



5th Annual Kashanian Scholarship Awarded

Rylee Baskett, a graduate of Astronaut High School, Titusville, is the fifth annual Masoud Kashanian scholarship winner. She will attend Florida State (FSU) and plans to major in Civil-Environmental Engineering.

A \$2000 check was presented to Rylee by PIPS President Rick English. The donation was made by Mae Hafizi, widow of the late Masoud Kashanian who was a devoted volunteer at the Sams House Nature Center, and the Pine Island Preservation Society.

On her application Rylee wrote

(continued on page 2)



(Above) Barbara Culbreth, grandmother, Mae Hafize, Rylee Baskett, and Rick English

Recent Homeschool Student Activities at Sams House

By Shannon Steele, EEL Naturalist



Photos above in the Pavilion at Sams House on April 2, show homeschool students taking part in an invasive species game that demonstrated how life changes for native frogs after invasive Cuban tree frogs are introduced.



(above) Homeschool families visited Sams House on April 16 to learn more about the Indian River Lagoon. Participants were excited for the hands-on opportunity to use a variety of scientific equipment to test water samples collected at Sams House.

(right) Instead of simply sharing facts about whale sizes and other giant animals of the world, naturalists Rob Lane and Shannon Steele created an engaging activity in which students attempted to throw rubber-tipped spears the lengths of these remarkable creatures. The homeschool students who attended Frontier School on April 9 thoroughly enjoyed this new update to the Dolphins & Whales class.



Scholarship Awardee Continued from Page 1.....

On Rylee Baskett's scholarship application she wrote: "After College I plan to come back and work for my local government as a civil engineer. I would like to assist in projects related to stormwater management, low impact infrastructure, and sustainable energy sources. By doing this I plan to assist my city with developing their infrastructure sustainably and assist in projects that can not only provide growth and overall well being in my city but also give back to the environment around me. Since the City of Titusville was what inspired me to try to make a difference with my career choice, I want to make sure the city is still able to develop and thrive to hopefully inspire other students that want to make changes to their community."

EEL Exhibits Earth Day at Blue Origin

By Rob Lane, EEL Naturalist



Overhead view of environmental organizations and Blue Origin employees on Earth Day.

Nine environmental organizations connected directly with over 500 Blue Origin employees at Kennedy Space Center on April 22, 2026, for Earth Day celebrations. EEL Central Region Naturalist Rob Lane represented both Sams House and the Environmentally Endangered Lands Program for Blue Origin’s Earth Day Celebration. *(Rob is at top left table in photo above).* Blue Origin marked the occasion with activities, a lunch and learn with Save Our Indian River Lagoon, and an Earth Day vendor fair.

The following environmental organizations participated: Save Our Indian River Lagoon, SPCA of Brevard County, Brevard Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL), Keep Brevard Beautiful, Sea Turtle Preservation Society, Merritt Island Wildlife Association, Master Gardeners, Brevard Natural Resources, and Brevard Zoo.



Martha Pessaro, PIPS Board member, reported **Outreach Activities:** Museums of Brevard April Events included a display at One Senior Place for “Every Day is Veterans Day” and the Suntree Rotary Club breakfast meeting. There was also an outreach at Eco Fest in May.

Sams House Monthly Activities

House and Cabin Tour

Every Thursday and Saturday at 3:00 PM

Sams Touch Table

Every First Saturday and Sunday of the Month
11:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Saturday Bird Walks at Sams House

Every Saturday 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Scavenger Hunt

Every Sunday 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Ramp Revamped

By Connor Wong, EEL Land Management Specialist

The disability ramp on the south side of the historic Sams House had deteriorated from over a decade of use. Central region EEL staff patched and repaired the ramp over the years, but it was time for something new! We got materials quotes from local hardware stores and ordered supplies within our budget of \$3,000. In mid-April, we spent five days tearing out the old wooden stringers and hardware and installing new lumber and beautiful dark brown composite decking to complement the brown porch on the house. Much of the railing along the ramp was also redone to brighten it to match the new ramp decking.

Next we will have the house itself repainted.

Saturday Morning Activities at Sams House



Photo by Darleen Hunt

Saturday mornings are typically busy at Sams House. Shown above is a Yoga class underway in the pavilion and through the screen you can see a group of scouts who have camped the night and are touring the area. At the same time birders are also being led on tours throughout the conservation area.



Contact Information

David DeMeyer, EEL Land Manager for Central Region; Connor Wong, EEL Land Management Specialist; Alex Schilling, Education Center Coordinator, Shannon Steele and Rob Lane, EEL Naturalists at Sams House. All can be reached at (321) 449-4720.

www.facebook.com/eelbrevard

Volgistics, this website which allows volunteers to sign up for shifts or projects online, as well as record volunteer hours, is located...at:

https://www.volgistics.com/vicnet/53695

The Docent Desk computer is set up for entry as well.

Website: https://www.brevardfl.gov/EELProgram/Sanctuaries/SamsHouse

https://www.facebook.com/pineislandpreservationsociety/

www.nbbd.com/godo/sanctuaries/SamsHouse/

PIPS Website: https://pineislandpressocorg or scan QR Code:



Pine Island Knotes editor: Darleen Hunt, 321 452-8433, dhunt125@aol.com

President's Thoughts...



Welcome to June! Summer begins this month, as always, with its heat, thunderstorms and hungry mosquitos. Even so, this is a great time of year to get outside in the mornings and take advantage of the activities at the Sams House and other EEL properties. If air conditioning is a necessity, the Sams house and cabin tours are Thursdays and Saturdays at 3:00.

On pages 1 and 2, there is an article about the presentation of the Masoud R. Kashanian Scholarship. It is awarded annually to an applicant who must be a graduating senior from a Brevard County high school who has been accepted at a Florida college or university and plans to major in a field related to environmental science, land or wildlife management. If you know a local class of 2027 student that meets these criteria, have them look for the announcement for next year's scholarship.

Finally, I want to remind you to make sure your dues are up to date. They are a prime source of funds which enable us to support PICA and Sams House. That and volunteering are two of the best ways to support the activities of PIPS.

Have a great summer!

Rick English

President, Pine Island Preservation Society

Pine Island Preservation Society

Board of Directors

- Rick English, President
- Shannah Trout, Vice President
- Jeff Thompson, Secretary
- Darleen Hunt, Treasurer
- Denise Christopher
- Brenda LaRoche
- Joe Matta
- Josie Neal
- Martha Pessaro
- John Schantzen
- Vivian Shay
- Diane Stees
- Jerry Stubbs
- Elaine Williams



Welcome New Member

The Pine Island Preservation Society is pleased to welcome our newest member, Carol Skagseth.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Membership is open to any individual or organization willing to support the Pine Island Preservation Society in its activities to assist the Pine island Conservation Area, including the historic Sams House, and the Environmentally Endangered Lands Program of Brevard County, Florida.

Your contact information will be handled as private data and will not be shared with anyone.

PLEASE PRINT

Name: _____ Date: _____
 Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
 Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

PLEASE CHECK CATEGORY OF ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP:		<input type="checkbox"/> New	<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal	
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior (55+)	\$10	<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$10	Corporate Memberships
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Couple (55+)	\$15	<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$20	<input type="checkbox"/> Horseshoe Crab \$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$15	<input type="checkbox"/> Sams Descendants	\$10	<input type="checkbox"/> Gopher Tortoise \$250
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting	\$50	<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	\$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> Barred Owl \$500
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Couple Supporting	\$75	<input type="checkbox"/> Life	\$250	<input type="checkbox"/> Eagle \$1000
				<input type="checkbox"/> Mastodon \$5000

Please make check payable to Pine Island Preservation Society or "PIPS" and mail check and membership application to Pine Island Preservation Society, Inc., 6195 North Tropical Trail, Merritt Island, FL 32953