

SHEPHERD ISLAND REPORTER 8/17

Taylor's Island again hosts a c

More than 120 Islanders voyaged to Taylor's Island Tuesday to renew the 1940s tradition of a midsummer party there — this year at the invitation of the town and its Taylor's Island Preservation and Management Committee. Rain and threatened thunderstorms motivated the organizers to delay the party, originally scheduled to begin at noon, by an hour. The rain moved through with no thunder and only a sprinkle was falling at party time. Blue skies followed partygoers home.

Most Islanders came to the event by way of shuttle boats captained by volunteers and boarded at Congdon's dock. Others paddled kayaks or motored in their own small boats.

Although the Island is public land that boaters in Coecles Harbor occasionally visit, the party provided a rare opportunity to walk through the historic house. Parts of the porch and the tower were closed off — porch floor replacement is planned as part of the proposed restoration and the tower is too small to accommodate crowds.

The music of Lisa Shaw and Tom Hashagen welcomed guests to the main room of the small house where Taylor's Island history was on display and visitors were asked to write suggestions on the island's use. Watercolor paintings of the island by Ram Island resident Rick Denning decorated the room as did a flower arrangement by Yioula Van Rynbach in honor of S. Gregory Taylor, the original owner, with whom Ms. Van Rynbach shares Greek ancestry.

Andrew Arkin, a former longtime tenant of the house beginning in the late 1950s, returned to his summer residence for the party and celebrated by going for a swim around the island.

Another guest focused on the future of the island. Laura Stevenson, who works for the state Department of Environmental Conservation on Peconic Estuary Program projects, is working with the Taylor's Island committee to help preserve the island's shoreline. "It's a great landmark," Ms. Stevenson said of the



PARTY SCENES (Clockwise): Sunshine at party's end; gathering under a weathered oak; musicians entertained from a bay window inside the historic house; committee Chair P.A.T. Hunt (left) will work with the DEC's Laura Stevenson on shoreline restoration.

Cara Loriz photos

island. She hopes to work with the town to renovate the island's bulkheaded shoreline to "restore the historic house but also restore the wetlands."

The entire Town Board attended, taking a break from the regular Tuesday work session. Taylor's Island committee members Barbara "Buzzy" Clark, Richie Surozenski, Roni King, Supervisor Alfred Kilb Jr. and chair P.A.T. Hunt welcomed visitors; member Mike Laspia manned the Burns Road landing to assist kayakers launching from there and member Keith Clark shuttled visitors on his boat from Congdon's dock.

Ms. Hunt said of the town's plans for the island: "One thing we know, if you don't use it, you lose it."

Cara Loriz

