

The Claiborne Clarion

A Newsletter for the Claiborne
Community
April 2015
Volume 9, Number 4

Sarah and Phil Sayre, April and May Editors
Barbara Reisert, Clarion Founder and Editor Emerita
Mary Gregorio, President, Claiborne Association

April Birthdays

10 Martha Hamlyn
23 Linda Harper
30 Terry Babb

April Events

Movie Nights

Every Wednesday 7pm
Cartoons at 6:30, through
most or all of April

Village Hall Work Day

Tuesday, April 7
Contact Jake Flory or Jim
Richardson for
information

Claiborne Association Spring General Meeting and Potluck

Saturday, April 11 – 6 pm
Bring your best dish and
beverage choice.

The Last Gasp of Winter

By Jim Richardson

It's only been a few weeks since Jack M. (not Jack Harrald) and I fell through the ice in the middle of Miles River. Since last month's Clarion had a cartoon illustrating the event, it's no secret, but I've been asked to write a brief account of that harrowing experience.

There are five iceboats that show up on the Claiborne Cove as soon as the ice looks thick enough to sail on. Normally, we stick to the cove, since it is the first to freeze and, more importantly, the water is shallow enough to make drowning nearly impossible. This February's cold spell, however, was unusually long and the ice conditions on the Miles River enticed us to move our small fleet to the Miles River Yacht Club. There, we had easier access to the ice and a newer and much larger area to sail on. In addition to the five iceboats we brought along an aluminum canoe for use as a rescue boat. We loaded it with long lines and plenty of life jackets.

Wednesday morning was everything we could ask for. Temperatures overnight had frozen a little melted snow that lay on top of the river ice, leaving the surface relatively smooth. After taking and examining ice samples from several sites, Roger, the most experienced iceboater in our group, pronounced it safe. The morning provided many exhilarating rides, and after a lunch and warm-up break, I was anxious to get back on the ice in the afternoon breeze.

The morning sails had made us all confident about the thickness of the ice. In high spirits, the skippers agreed to take a group photo at a day mark about a quarter mile from shore, but still within the safe area we had been on all morning. We assembled for the group photo and there was much joking and laughter. Then someone suggested that we should take a second photo at a different mark, one located up the river and well out of the range that we had been sailing all morning. This was our first mistake.

April Events (continued)

Claiborne Concert Series
Presents Victoria Vox,
Ukulele Master

Monday, April 20

Uke workshop and strum-
along, 6:00-6:45pm

Concert, 7:00 to 8:00pm
with Tilghman ES
students and others

Donation: \$10-15 per
adult will be appreciated.

Bring your beverage of
choice.

Earth Day Planting

April 22, 5:00 pm (so kids
can be a part)

The Village Hall sign will
get a lovely bed in which
to stand. Come dig,
plant, or just watch and
give advice!

Save these May dates!

May 2: Village Hall Spring
Clean-up, inside and
outside! Pizza for the
volunteers!

May 19: Claiborne
Concert Series presents
Nicolo Whimsey



There was some concern about a long ice crevice we would have to cross, but no one questioned the sturdiness of the ice on the other side of it. Two boats sailed towards shore to find a good place to cross and two other boats, Jack's and mine, headed out further into the river to cross. Second mistake.

We all crossed the crevice, but neither Jack nor I was aware of how thin the ice was on the other side. A strong current had eaten away the underside of the ice, leaving it only a little over an inch thick. Jack was the first to break through. As soon as I saw his boat half-under, I began sailing cautiously towards him. When I was just forty yards away, he waved me off and told me to sail towards shore. Instead I stopped my boat, stepped out, and took down the sail, thinking that if I was careful I could push my boat close enough that Jack could use it to pull himself out.

By the time I got the sail down and got out, I saw that the rescue canoe was on the way, so I stood by and kept Jack aware of the progress the rescue boat was making. Just as they reached him, however, it was my turn to break through. Apparently, though the ice under me had been firm enough to support me for those anxious minutes, I had remained in the same spot too long. It was like falling through a trap door.

The water was shockingly cold, and all my warm clothes were soaking and pulling me down. I immediately grabbed hold of the floating boat hull that now lay on its side, its mast now horizontal on the ice, and that hull kept me from sinking. I realized what a good idea it would have been to have been wearing a life jacket (third mistake), and have my ice picks around my neck (fourth mistake). The picks were still in the boat but I didn't realize it. I looked towards the spot where Jack went in and could see that he was safe in the canoe and being pulled back to solid ice. It would soon be my time to be rescued. That was when I heard the St. Michaels fire station's siren and knew that someone smart had dialed 911. I tried to pull myself onto the ice but only managed to break more ice around me. My clothes were too heavy and the ice too thin.

Choptank Electric Awards \$2K Grant to Claiborne

Choptank Electric Trust has awarded the Claiborne Association a grant of \$2000 toward the purchase and installation of a heating and air conditioning system for the Hall. Total cost to the Association for the new system will be \$7860, which will come from funds donated for a new heating system. Tim Green, owner of Accent Heating and Air, will install a mini split system in the main room as soon as possible. The system will reduce our heating bills and provide air conditioning for summer events.

Choptank Electric Trust is funded by "Operation Round Up" which rounds up your electric bill to the nearest dollar unless you opt out of the program. It is part of Choptank's "Neighbor serving neighbor" program. The Trust provides funds to needy individuals for utility bills, food, clothing, shelter, equipment, medical and educational needs. It also funds organizations that serve communities.

If you know someone who could benefit from Choptank's generosity, download an application form at Choptankelectric.com; select Community, then Operation Round Up, then click on "individual" or "organization".

(Editor's note: Kirke Harper was too modest to mention that he was responsible for identifying this funding opportunity and writing a grant request. Well done, Kirke!)

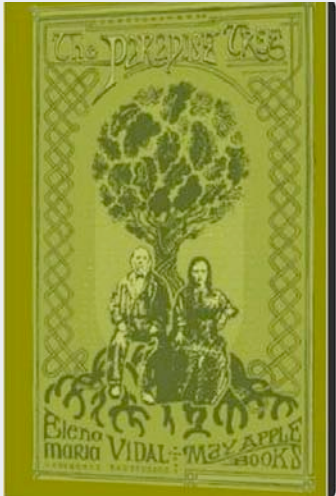
That's when I knew that there was nothing I could do to save myself; that my life was completely in the hands of my rescuers. Amazingly, I remained calm and completely confident as I watched Mike Keene make his way towards me in the canoe. An avid runner, biker and swimmer with a long history of marathon, triathlon and ironman competitions, Mike was the right man for the job. He was in the extreme bow of the canoe so he could reach over the end, using an ice pick in each hand to break through the thin ice around the boat. The canoe's stern rose in a very awkward manner above the water. (See Renny's drawing in last month's issue). I watched as he attacked the ice like a mad man, the picture of sheer determination as he made his slow progress towards me. As I remember it, he only paused once, and only for a few seconds to gasp and rest. When he was about ten yards away and losing steam, I called to him to throw me the rope. As ropes often do, it tangled as he was uncoiling it and, realizing his frustration, I called out to him to take his time and that I was all right. I think I paused a second and then added, "But not too much time!"

He threw the rope and it landed just a couple of feet away. As soon as I grabbed it, Mike hauled me through the thin ice and to the canoe. Once there, and with Mike's help, I was able to pull myself into the canoe where I collapsed on my stomach like a big fish. Mike greeted me with the comment "Now we are even," his way of reminding me that I had rescued him from the icy water seven years ago at almost the same spot.

The other sailors, stationed at intervals from the shore, pulled on the long rope tied to the stern of the canoe and we began to move toward shore. In order to do that job, they also were standing on very thin ice, but fortunately none of them broke through during either of the rescues. As soon as we reached safe ice, I got out of the canoe and began walking towards shore, knowing that I had to move to keep warm. When I finally arrived on the beach, I could see the many professional and volunteer fire fighters that had responded to our call and I was very grateful to see them. Roger walked me to the yacht club where Jack helped me out of my wet clothes and wrapped me in two white table cloths.

By now, I was shaking uncontrollably, and couldn't do much for myself. Jack found me a pair of pants and stayed with me, encouraging me to drink hot liquids (he held the cup; I was shaking too violently to manage it) and to move around. I couldn't stop shivering and talking. A doctor who had responded to the call took my temperature which was just above 94 degrees, low but not life threatening. We figured later that I had been in the water a little over ten minutes. I asked the yacht club hostess to call my wife, but she wisely suggested that I make the call myself in order to better assure her that I was all right. I called Martha and she arrived within a few minutes, concerned but, happily, not angry with me! I'm very lucky to have such a loving and understanding wife!

I want to thank the iceboat rescue crew to whom I owe my life: Mike Keene, Jake Flory, Roger Pickall, Mike Kabler, Kevin Garber and Bob Luff. It's nice to have friends that can think and respond quickly and effectively. I also want to thank the St. Michaels Fire Department that responded to our emergency call and the Miles River Yacht Club for opening its doors and offering us shelter. Lessons I have learned: There is no such thing as "safe" ice. Always iceboat with others; never alone;(one preferably with Ironman credentials). Wear a life jacket and ice picks around your neck. Never sail in an area without first checking out the ice conditions. Always have a rescue craft readily available



Mary-Eileen Russell would like to thank all of the kind friends and neighbors who came to the book signing for *The Paradise Tree* at the News Center. For those who were not able to make it, signed copies of the novel are available right here in Claiborne, as are the other novels by the same author. Just contact Mary Eileen at 410-463-5391 or emvidal@planetrussel.net. For more information visit http://www.amamazon.com/gp/entity/Elena-Maria-Vidal/B001KMO6C0?ie=UTF8&ref=nnt_dp_epwbk_0#.



with plenty of line. If you can't save yourself, stay calm and conserve your energy until someone comes to your rescue.

PS: The ice picks that Mike Keene used to rescue me were lent to him just moments before either boat went through the ice. Diana Mautz, an ice sailor herself, heard that we were iceboating on the Miles River and thought it would be smart to have an extra set on hand, "just in case"! Bless her.

Claiborne Volunteers.....

(Editor's note: The second in an occasional series of stories about how members of the Claiborne community give of their time and energy to causes in which they believe. The Clarion editors invite you to share stories about your volunteer passions. If you would like to share your story, please send a note addressed to the Clarion at claibornemd@gmail.com. We will be happy to publicize your cause!)

The April story comes from Jack Harrald.

Talbot Interfaith Shelter – Easton's Promise

By Jack Harrald

This is a story about how small groups of dedicated volunteers can make a difference in our community and, to give away the end, how and why you might want to participate as a Talbot Interfaith Shelter (TIS) volunteer.

In March 2014, TIS was at a crossroads. TIS had been created in 2008 by a group of individuals from a number of religious communities and town, county and not-for-profit organizations, concerned with the plight of people in the mid-shore region without a home or shelter, especially families with small children.

The TIS vision is that no one in Talbot County will ever have to spend a night on the streets, in a car, or in the woods because he or she cannot find housing. The core mission of TIS is to provide safe, temporary shelter to men, women, and children who lack adequate housing and to raise awareness of the issues of homelessness in our community.

For 6 years, TIS had operated as a cold weather overnight shelter that rotated between host sites. Over 400 volunteers from 19 faith communities provided their time and energy to serve those in need in our community. TIS established close working relationships with town and county agencies, the Housing Commission of Talbot County, The Neighborhood Service Center, the Mid Shore Mental Health Systems Roundtable, and the Mid Shore Community Foundation. TIS was founded as an interfaith collective, but we keep religious ideology strictly out of our activities, rules, regulations and daily operations. The religious choices of our shelter guests are

Bike-Across-the-US

Arrival in Florida

By Hannah Richardson

Wondering if we ever made it out of Texas? Well, I pondered this question for about two weeks, until we finally crossed into Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida in what seemed a matter of days. Even though trekking through Florida took a while, we were happily greeted by warm, sunny weather and beautiful Gulf beaches. On Sunday, March 15 we finally rolled into St. Augustine Beach and touched our front tires to the Atlantic, some 3,100 miles under our wheels. It was a bittersweet moment as I now understand the lore of bicycle touring and how, if given the opportunity to continue on, it would be hard to ever stop.



theirs alone. We do offer as much support as we can to our guests, and refer them to services in the community, collaborating with local health, mental health, and social service providers.

As the TIS board met last year, however, it was clear that we were not meeting the needs of our community. Fire codes limited us to providing shelter to 5 guests at a time. We were a “homeless” homeless shelter slogging blankets, supplies and support across town as we rotated host sites. We were not meeting our goal of serving homeless families with small children, even though we started a family rental assistance program with the Housing Commission of Talbot and the Neighborhood Service Center. Two needs surveys and the annual point-in-time survey indicated that on any given night 100-150 people in our community were without shelter and many others were in precarious housing situations.

Our board decided to investigate the possibility of finding or building a year round shelter, to establish TIS as an independent 501 (c) (3) (we had been part of Mid Shore Community Foundation), and to hire a part time Executive Director.

Just over a year ago, I agreed to become the President of the Talbot Interfaith Shelter Board so that Julie Lowe, President and founding Board Member could assume the position of TIS Executive Director. At this point, we were a small operation with big ambitions. We had been a \$40,000 per year organization that owned no assets and operated five months a year with one part-time employee, our incredible Operations Manager, Fran Doran. We now had our team in place and our plan was to manage a slow transition to a year round operation once we found an appropriate rented or purchased home.

The transition is certainly occurring. The slow part did not work out! We are renting, and will soon purchase, *Easton's Promise* a 6 bedroom, 6 bath, fire suppression system-equipped former bed and breakfast in Easton. We are operating a full time shelter serving 8 guests, including a one-year-old child, and are supporting 3 families (11 individuals) in apartments. We are in position to expand our shelter residence to 12-15 guests when we execute the purchase the building. We raised more than \$160,000 this year and are committed to raising and sustaining an operating budget of \$240,000. Sounds like, and it is, a lot of money. If you do the math, however, it works out to less than \$25/night to provide shelter or housing to a homeless individual.



Easton's Promise: The new TIS home

For those following the story in the Star Democrat, the TIS newsletter, Facebook as friends of TIS (Talbot Interfaith Shelter, Inc.) or on the TIS web site (www.talbotinterfaithshelter) you are aware of how and why we moved so fast. The cliff notes version:

- March 2014 TIS learns that *Easton's Promise* was for sale, inquires about possibility of renting, told that the property was not for rent
- April 2014 Anonymous "angel" donor (a TIS volunteer) offers a challenge grant of \$300,000 if we would raise the funds needed to purchase and operate *Easton's Promise*.
- April 2014 TIS makes offer, contingent upon receiving all necessary permits to owner, files application with town of Easton for special exception permit that would allow TIS to operate a shelter in commercial/residential zone.
- June 2014 Board of Zoning Appeals holds hearing on TIS permit application. Opposition expressed by a group of Easton residents.
- July 2014 Easton Board of Zoning Appeals grants special

- exception permit to TIS.
- Aug 2014 Group of Easton residents appeal the BOZA action to the Talbot County Circuit Court
- Oct 2014 TIS leases *Easton's Promise* with option to buy when permit appeal is decided. TIS moves its office to Easton's Promise.
- Nov 2014 TIS starts to serve guests in *Easton's Promise*. Plaintiffs file request for stay to shut the shelter
- Jan 2015 TIS continues to serve homeless guests in extreme winter weather. Circuit Court denies request for stay
- March 2015 Circuit Court denies appeal.

We do not know if the decision of the Circuit Court will be appealed to the Maryland Court of Appeals. We are grateful for the outstanding pro bono legal support we have received.

We are extremely pleased with *Easton's Promise* and proud of what our volunteers and guests have achieved. The atmosphere is one of dignity and respect. The baby charms everyone. Guests are seeking and obtaining employment and education. We are keeping the shelter open after our traditional Easter closing date and plan on operating a year-round shelter. Our apartment leasing support program is working well and is providing a safe and secure environment for families that would otherwise be in crisis.

Claiborne has been a source of continuing support. Many of you have made generous donations. Jim Richardson, Martha Hamlyn, Phil and Sarah Sayre, John Scott, Kathy Bosin, Judy and I have volunteered at the shelter. Kathy served as a Board member and coordinated our major fund raising event, the Shelter Century bicycle ride. Abby Cureton is our volunteer and donor data system manager. I am hoping that as you read this and have not yet been involved with TIS, you have started to wonder if you could help. Yes! There is the obvious financial need of course, but we also need more volunteers:

We are switching to a model of 31 teams of at least 8 people to fill 6 positions. Each team will be responsible for a day of the month. We will have teams from most of our traditional faith communities, but we are seeking involvement from the business and service organizations and the community at large. If you would like to be on a volunteer team from St. Michaels/Bay Hundred let me know. On the 8th of every month we will provide supervisors from 7-10 am and from 6:30—11:00 each evening and a dinner meal for 10-12. This will be a rewarding and enjoyable experience and will change how you perceive the issue of homelessness. Give me a call if you are interested or have any questions. My cell phone is 571-215-3283, home phone is 410-745-5240 and email is jrharrald@gmail.com