

SICO President's Letter
Stephen Baumgartner
March 22, 2020

Greetings to all MacMahan'ers!

I know that you are looking forward to another summer on MacMahan, and that some of you are thinking about the island as a refuge from the coronavirus pandemic. I am writing to share with you the measures that SICO is taking to make the island as safe as possible, and also our requests to you to help keep it that way. Much of what I write may seem gloomy, but that is not my intent. Rather, it is to assure you that we are being realistic, facing the danger and considering how to deal with it. We need everyone's cooperation!

Some of what I write below may become obsolete. Matters are likely to get much worse everywhere and to lead to even more intense restrictions by local, state, and federal governments than we face today. There may be travel bans that make it impossible for people to come from outside Maine to MacMahan. We will all have to deal with those changes as they arise.

Although the privacy of MacMahan provides a natural measure of isolation not available where most of us live, that does not mean it can be viewed as a sanctuary that the virus cannot reach. It will be up to each of us to do our part, particularly as most of us will travel from or through other areas where the rate of infection is higher and isolation is harder to achieve. Many of us immediately shop for groceries and other supplies when we arrive. Carelessness at that time could easily bring the virus onto the island. Furthermore, MacMahan is a very social place. It will take a conscious effort to stick to safe behaviors during this crisis.

We have no healthcare facilities on the island, and Maine's healthcare system does not have capacity to deal with an explosion of sick "Summer People". Anyone who becomes seriously ill while on MacMahan will be in grave danger. Therefore it is our duty to do whatever we can to prevent this from happening.

A significant fraction of the MacMahan community is in the 70-80+ age range for whom the danger of severe illness is much higher than for younger people. We also have several people with existing health issues and compromised immune systems. Again, these facts make it especially important that **all of us** take extra precautions. To be melodramatic: you may feel fine, but please do not risk infecting and killing your parents or grandparents!

The first precaution we can take is this: **unless you are absolutely certain that you and your group are not infected, please do not come to the island!**

As a minimum, please practice careful physical isolation/separation for two weeks before you start the trip. One who has been isolated for two weeks and shows no symptoms is unlikely to be infected. If you do come, **please also observe physical separation for two weeks after you arrive regardless of how you feel.** Yes, if you only have a two-week vacation that will be a big imposition. But would you rather risk getting sick?

Chris and his team work closely together, so if one of them gets infected the others are almost certain to catch it from them. That would be a disaster for the rest of us, as we would likely have to shut down

the island facilities. Therefore they will be following safe practices to the best extent they can, both on and off the island – even though this will be a strain on their naturally sociable natures.

Some of you may be considering going out to the island early to escape riskier situations at home. Please do not do this unless you are ready and able to be completely self-sufficient! Chris and his team need time to ready the island pre-season. They cannot spare the time to deal with individual cottage issues and cannot rearrange their schedule to make everyone happy pre-season. The water will likely be on for only a portion of the island until some time in May, and we will be using well water. Because we now flush with fresh water, there is a risk of running the well dry if too many people come pre-season.

Additional precautions we are taking:

- We will attempt to have hand sanitizer available at the Georgetown landing and each of the major docks on island so that people can avoid contaminating the piers, ramps, and floats. There is, of course, a risk that these will “walk away”. You can help if you bring your own sanitizer and surface disinfectant wipes. **Wash your hands!**
- **Chris will require advance notice so that he can finish opening your cottage at least a week before your arrival.** This will allow enough time for any virus that may have gotten onto surfaces such as faucets and doorknobs to die.
- **Until further notice, there will be no large group gatherings on MacMahan, such as (gadzooks!) the Yacht Club Cocktail Parties, PotLuck dinners, etc.**
- **We are discussing ways to hold SICO business and information meetings as safely as possible.** More information on that will follow.

Stay safe!
Steve