



PRESS RELEASE

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## Center Honored at Savannah Bookstore Event

On Saturday evening, November 17, the Book Lady Bookstore on Liberty Street in Savannah was packed with enthusiastic lovers of coastal Georgia's environment and artwork that's inspired by it.

More than a hundred people turned out to learn more about the Center for a Sustainable Coast, a non-profit group defending coastal Georgia's natural resources, and *The World of the Salt Marsh*, a book written by former center board member and environmental journalist, Charles Seabrook. Many also attended to view the creations of 32 local artists who exhibited their work in tribute to the renowned marshes, waterways, and wildlife of Georgia's spectacular coast.

The event organizers, bookstore owner Joni Saxon-Giusti and well-known Wilmington Island artist Betsy Cain, decided that a portion of the proceeds from the sale of artwork and copies of *The World of the Salt Marsh* should be donated to the Center for a Sustainable Coast. "The Center has been a steadfast protector of our marshes and other coastal resources, so we designed the event as a benefit to help support their vital work," they said in agreement.

Steve Willis, Center board president and coastal artist, thanked the organizers for hosting the event and recognized fellow board member, Ellen Schoolar, former board member, Charles Seabrook, and the Center's executive director, David Kyler. Mr. Willis then commented about the Center's role and his reasons for being involved. "The Center looks at the big picture and ties together a wide range of issues affecting the region's environment that are too often misunderstood or altogether overlooked," Willis emphasized. He went on to describe the problems created when decision-makers fail to include many interrelated factors in approving projects that damage essential ecosystems. "It is the Center's unique mission to improve how we use our irreplaceable resources by explaining the far-reaching consequences of human activities and exploring more responsible choices that are available to us." As an example, he told the audience that the Center would be hosting a forum on Solar Energy on December 1.

In expounding on the themes of his book, author Charles Seabrook made some comments about the importance of the marshes of the Southeast coast. He described his childhood on Johns Island near Charleston, South Carolina, saying, "I spent half my childhood trying to get off an island. I have half of my adulthood trying to get back." Seabrook explained to the rapt audience that marshes are among the most naturally productive areas in the world, producing far more food and fiber than even the most productive farmland. Although marshes are abundant in this region of the country, he observed, "they are vulnerable to destruction and must be protected." Seabrook concluded by saying, "If we want to preserve the health and diversity of our seafood and the natural beauty of our coast, we must defend the marshes. To do that, we've got to do a better job of enforcing existing environmental laws."

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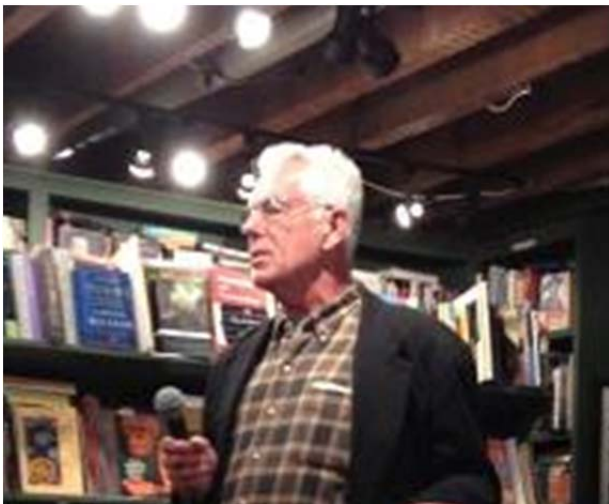
When asked about the greatest single threat to the marshes, without hesitating Seabrook responded, “Sea level rise.” Rising sea level is a direct result of global warming, yet many political leaders – at all levels of government – either deny that the problem exists or refuse to take urgently needed steps to get it under control as soon as possible.

Following these presentations, participants mingled in lively conversations about art, the environment, and the need to make progress on the important policy issues that are at hand. Many purchased copies of *The World of the Salt Marsh*, signed by the author.

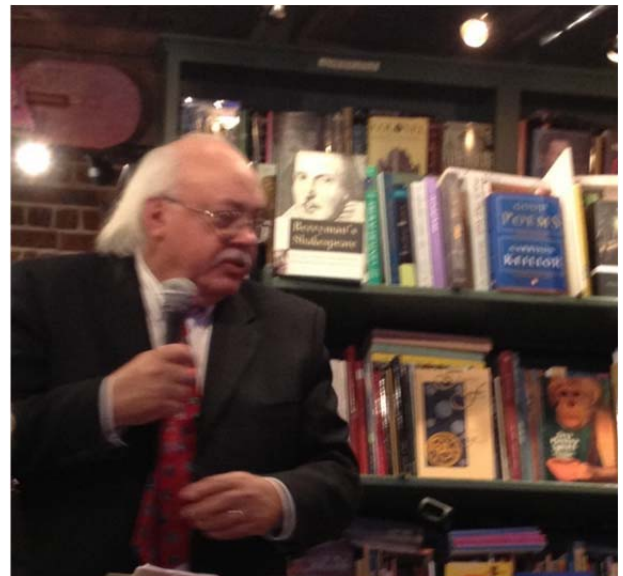
The art will be on exhibit at the bookstore through December 24<sup>th</sup>. The public is urged to visit the Book Lady Bookstore to see and purchase artwork, buy a copy of *The World of the Salt Marsh*, and pick up materials related to the Center for a Sustainable Coast.

To learn more, please go to the Center’s website, [www.sustainablecoast.org](http://www.sustainablecoast.org).

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Steve Willis, Center Board President



Author Charles Seabrook