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Spring 2011

SGLA Elects Officers & Directors at Annual Meeting

The 2011 Annual Meeting of the St. George Lighthouse Association was held on Saturday, April 30, in St. George Lighthouse Park.

The membership elected the following Officers and Directors:

Dennis Barnell, President and Director
Jim Kemp, Vice-President and Director
Terry Kemp, Secretary and Director
Phyllis Vitale-Lewis, Treasurer and Director
Joe Bacher, Director
Vito Bell, Director
Doug Brandt, Director
Bud Hayes, Director
Richard Saucer, Director
Fred Stanley, Director



SGLA Board of Directors – Terry Kemp, Phyllis Vitale-Lewis, Jim Kemp, Vito Bell, Joe Bacher, Dennis Barnell, Richard Saucer, Bud Hayes, and Fred Stanley.
Director Doug Brandt was absent when this photo was taken.

Members in attendance enjoyed hot dogs and all the trimmings, and heard reports on the status of the Keeper's House Museum, attendance at the lighthouse and Visitor Center, the membership campaign, and the financial condition of the corporation.

The Certificate of Occupancy for the Lighthouse Keeper's House has been received, and work on the building is almost complete (just a few little "touch-ups" remain). Production of museum displays continues. We are hoping for Phase I installation of museum exhibits before the summer season gets too far along.

Lighthouse Keeper Stanley Colvin reported that more than 40,000 people have climbed the lighthouse since its opening in December of 2008. Visitation was down slightly in 2010, attributable to the general decline in tourism due to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. The Visitor Center had 25,540 visitors since the 2010 annual meeting, which is down about 15% over the previous year.

Following the meeting, many attendees visited the Keeper's House for a look at the beautiful workmanship used in replicating the historic structure.

Coming Soon....

Museum Phase I Installation – Target Early Summer!

Florida Lighthouse Day - 2011 and 2012

Are You Ready for a Challenge?

Florida Lighthouse Day 2011 was a huge success, with a record 377 people taking advantage of free climbing to visit the top of the Cape St. George Light!



Jim Wolfram and Marty Ray at the grill.

The crowd enjoyed barbecued chicken grilled on site by SGLA members Jim Wolfram and Marty Ray, and scrumptious side dishes and cupcakes provided by the Culinary Arts class at the Franklin County School with coordination by Jean Wolfram.

Local musicians "Up Close" entertained from the porch of the Keeper's House, and delighted lighthouse climbers and park visitors with their laid back sound.



Volunteers serve the crowd.

We are already planning next year's Florida Lighthouse Day, with another Lighthouse Challenge on the drawing board. This extremely popular event was inaugurated in 2010 and attracted lighthouse enthusiasts from around the country. A possible change for 2012 will be the inclusion of the Pensacola Lighthouse, which will make the two-day event into a real "challenge" spanning 225 scenic miles along Florida's Panhandle. Also participating will be the Cape San Blas Lighthouse, the Crooked River Lighthouse, the St. Marks Lighthouse, and of course, the Cape St. George Light.

Sunset/Full Moon Climbs Continue Through Summer

The Sunset/Full Moon Climbs to the top of the Cape St. George Light, started in November by SGLA board member Doug Brandt, are a huge success! The monthly climbs have been selling out, as people come to enjoy a sparkling cider toast to the full moon and hors d'oeuvres provided by local chefs.

The sunset/moonrise climb is limited to 10 people, the number that can be accommodated in the lantern room at one time. If time and space permit, additional climbers can view the full moon as the initial group departs. The cost for the sunset/moonrise climb is \$10 for SGLA members and \$15 for non-members. Participants who make the climb after sunset pay \$5 for members and \$10 for non-members.

To date we have been fortunate to have clear skies and good visibility for the climbs. The proximity of sunset and moonrise times over the summer will make the viewing even more dramatic. Call the Visitor Center at 850-927-7744 for reservations.

Special thanks to the island businesses who have donated hors d'oeuvres for the climbs: Harry A's, Oyster Bay Bar & Grill, and Sometimes It's Hotter Seasoning Company.

Summer Full Moon Climbs

June 15 (Wednesday)
8:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

July 15 (Friday)
8:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

August 13 (Saturday)
7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

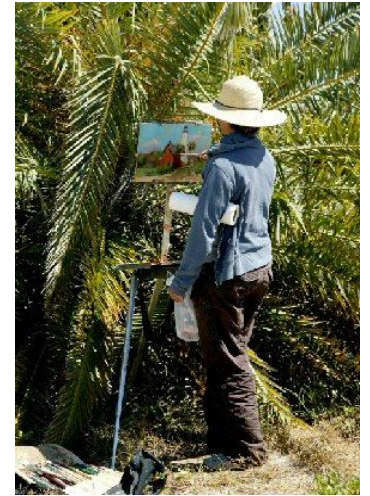
September 12 (Monday)
7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Plein Air Artists at the Light

St. George Lighthouse Park was once again the venue for the nationally acclaimed plein air artists who for 10 days in May were on the Forgotten Coast to capture the beauty of the area during the annual Plein Air Invitational Paint-Out, sponsored by the Forgotten Coast Cultural Coalition.

Plein Air artists paint outdoors “en plein air,” which is a French expression meaning “in the open air.” Plein air art tends to be spontaneous, as artists capture a moment in time. The paintings are usually completed on site, within the span of several hours.

Artist Katie Dobson Cundiff of Sarasota chose to paint the lighthouse and the new keeper’s house, while Natalia Andreeva, a Russian-born artist who now lives in Tallahassee, and Hodges Soileau of Venice, Florida set up in one of the picnic pavilions to paint the dunes and blue waters of the Gulf. Ken DeWaard of Viroqua, Wisconsin settled in on the beach to paint a scene of people enjoying an afternoon in the sun and waves.



Katie Dobson Cundiff paints the lighthouse.



Artists Hodges Soileau and Natalia Andreeva paint at the picnic pavilion in St. George Lighthouse Park.



Ken DeWaard painting on the beach at SGL.



Reception at the Keeper's House.

Following the afternoon of painting on the island, the St. George Lighthouse Association, one of the hosting partners of the Plein Air Paint-Out, sponsored a reception for artists and patrons in the Keepers House. More than 100 people came to meet the artists and view the day’s paintings.

The four artists who had painted on the island were joined by artists Diane Scott, who was staying on the island with SGLA member Carol Miley, James Richards, who was staying with islanders Kay and Dan Wheeler, and Greg Barnes. Diane brought with her a painting of Fred’s shrimp house in Eastpoint, and James shared three paintings completed the day before, including an oyster boat in the morning light that went on to win the Artists Choice award at the Patrons Party on Saturday.

Time to Renew Your SGLA Membership

Our 2011 Membership Renewal Campaign is in full swing, so if you haven't renewed your membership in the St. George Lighthouse Association, now is the time!

SGLA 2011 Business Members

Aloha Bugs Pest Management
Marilyn and Mason Bean, Realtors
BJ's Pizza
Bobby James Roofing
The Butler Agency
Island Adventures
Jerry Thompson, Realtor
Journeys of St. George Island
Knorrwood Antiques, Gettysburg, PA
Prudential Shimmering Sands Realty
Resort Vacation Properties of St. George Island
Thomas M. Shuler, Attorney-at-Law
Sometimes It's Hotter Seasoning Company
Survivors Bait and Tackle
St. George Island Civic Club

Every membership is important, and enables us to maintain the lighthouse and the park and preserve our history for future generations.

Exciting news from this year's membership campaign is our new total of 49 Lifetime Patron Members, who have contributed \$500 or more to "Protect the Light." Equally noteworthy is the addition of eight new Business Members who recognize the value that the presence of the lighthouse brings to our community. SGLA currently has 197 memberships, representing about 350 members.

Members have always enjoyed the benefits of free lighthouse climbing and a discount on lighthouse merchandise at the Visitor Center. This year we hope to add more member events as well as recognition in the quarterly newsletters.

Please patronize our Business Members when you need services on St. George Island or the surrounding area (or when you are visiting Gettysburg, Pennsylvania!).

Ship Model Donated to Museum

A beautiful and intricately detailed model of the Danish ship "Norske Love" built by SGI resident Dr. Michael H. Wilder in 1984 has been donated to the Keeper's House Museum.

Dr. Wilder, who passed away on April 15, 2011, was a local pediatrician affiliated prior to his retirement with the Franklin and Gulf County Health Departments. He developed an interest in building model ships while in medical school at Ohio State University, and built several models, of which the "Norske Love" (which means "Northern Lion") was his favorite.

The original ship was 248 feet in length, 222 feet tall, and had a beam of 50 feet. Dr. Wilder built the model with a scale of one inch equal to 75 feet. The model is enclosed in a glass case which is 45 inches long, 18 inches wide and 40 inches tall. It sits on its own custom table, which is included in the donation.



NORSKE LOVE
DANISH 1765

Earlier this year, Dr. Wilder and his wife Tracey Burdick met several times with SGLA board members to discuss the donation of his beloved model ship. Although the ship was built in Denmark in 1765, it was the kind of ship that would have used the naval stores produced in this area years ago. Rags soaked in pine tar would have been used between the ships planking to stop leaks, and the extensive rigging would have been coated with pine tar to prevent rot.

During his career, Dr. Wilder pursued his dream to improve the health and lives of others in many unique and meaningful ways all over the world. He participated in a study of community health development in Bolivia in 1967. He was a medical extern at the Tohono O'odham Reservation in Sells, Arizona in 1969. He contributed to the global eradication of smallpox through a World Health Organization vaccination program in Bihar, India in 1974.

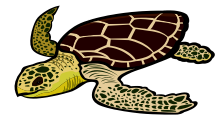
In 1986 Dr. Wilder left private practice and moved to Tallahassee to serve as the first State Epidemiologist with the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services and later worked for eight years as a physician with FSU's Thagard Student Health Center until 1998. He served as a consultant for the Centers for Disease Control/WHO Stop Transmission of Polio program in Bangladesh in 2000. He was a physician for the Nez Perce Tribe's Nimiipuu Health program in Lapwai, Idaho from 2002 to 2004.

He owned property on St. George Island since 1994 and became a full-time resident in 1998.

The "Norske Love" will occupy a place of honor in the Keeper's House as a tribute to a man dedicated to serving the well-being of mankind worldwide, meticulous in his attention to detail, and committed to his life in Franklin County and on St. George Island.



Lights Off for Sea Turtles!



The light at the top of the Cape St. George Light and the flood lights which illuminate the lighthouse and the Keeper's House were turned off on April 30 in deference to the sea turtles who nest on the island's beaches. The lights will be re-illuminated on November 1.



Lighthouses come in All shapes and sizes!

Assistant Lighthouse Keeper Jim Dunkin met Neil and Jean Beisenstein of Arkansas when they visited the Cape St. George Light in April. Neil shared with Jim these photos of a lighthouse he built, which is now on a lake in Arkansas. It is a working lighthouse complete with a rotating light. Very cool!

Quick Blinks

- Thanks to SGLA Business Member Journeys of St. George Island for treating Visitor Center volunteers to a visit to their shop and a sunset cruise on Apalachicola Bay. Captains Justin McMillan and Jeremy Willoughby took 14 volunteers out to Little St. George Island, where we enjoyed refreshments provided by Journeys and by the St. George Island Visitor Center. Just at sunset the boats stopped near Nick's Hole and Justin and Jeremy shucked oysters fresh from the bay. A delicious Apalachicola Bay oyster with a dab of hot sauce, a glass of wine, and a spectacular sunset viewed from the water -- it doesn't get any better than this!

- Bye-bye to our Visitor Center volunteers who leave for cooler climates in the summer. This means that Elaine is especially in need of help at the VC for the next few months, so if you have a free half-day and enjoy meeting our island guests, consider spending some time at the VC. And to those of you who are leaving (or have already left), be safe and have fun over the next few months, and we'll "see you when the summer's through...."
- Thanks to the volunteers who helped spread pine straw in St. George Lighthouse Park prior to Florida Lighthouse Day in April. Franklin County, through Commissioner and SGLA member Pinki Jackel and Parks and Recreation Director Van Johnson, provides the pine straw twice a year. Lighthouse volunteers are so good that 100 bales of straw were spread in a "quick blink!"
- The closing of two of Franklin County's banks earlier this year was unfortunate in most ways, but proved to bring an unexpected benefit to SGLA. The FDIC auctioned all the furnishings from the Gulf State Community Bank buildings on the island and in Eastpoint, and SGLA directors realized that the conference room table and chairs from the Eastpoint branch would be a perfect fit for the new meeting room in the Keeper's House. With the assistance of lighthouse benefactor Harry Arnold, we were able to get the table and chairs at a great price. And the fact that there are 10 directors and only eight comfy chairs means that everyone comes to board meetings on time!
- The Cape St. George Light has been a destination of choice for two recent press tours that visited Franklin County. On May 2, SGLA entertained 10 travel writers from the western U.S. with a continental breakfast at the Keeper's House and a tour of the lighthouse and Visitors Center. Then on Saturday, May 14, about 20 journalists on the Tourist Development Council's Geiger Press Tour visited the lighthouse. We look forward to some good media coverage as a result of these visits. By the way, did everyone notice the great photo of the Cape St. George Light in the May 2011 issue of *Southern Living* magazine (page 103, to be exact)? As we all know, *SL* is one of the premier style publications focusing on this area of the country, with a huge circulation and readership. We are thrilled that they used a photo of our lighthouse!
- The Florida Lighthouse Association is planning to hold its fall meeting in our area on October 22 and 23. The business meeting will be held in Port St. Joe, with lighthouse climbs at Cape San Blas, Crooked River, and Cape St. George. Stay tuned for more details. SGLA President Dennis Barnell represented us at the recent FLA meeting at the Anclote Key Lighthouse near Tarpon Springs in May.

A Parting Shot....



This unique shot of the Cape St. George Light was taken by island photographer Ron Dickey. Ron and his wife Lois recently sold their SGI home. We will miss them!