

## Lighthouse Hosts 100,000th Climber

An important milestone was celebrated at the Cape St. George Lighthouse on Saturday, July 26, when the 100,000<sup>th</sup> individual to climb the lighthouse since its reconstruction made it to the top of the 77-foot tower.

Karsyn Rae Nauss, age 10, from Forsyth, Georgia was the history-making climber. She was awarded a Lifetime Free Climbing Pass, a framed commemorative certificate, and a gift basket from the Lighthouse Gift Shop.

Jeannie Nauss accompanied her two daughters, Karsyn and her eight-year-old sister Avery, on the lighthouse climb. Jeannie said that the family visits St. George Island often for fishing and beach vacations, but that this was their first visit to the historic lighthouse.

Karsyn said that she loved the view from the top of the lighthouse, looking out over the Gulf of Mexico and Apalachicola Bay, and said she felt "really special and lucky" to be the 100,000<sup>th</sup> climber. She said that she plans to climb to the top of the lighthouse every time the Nauss family visits St. George Island.

After keeping a close count of climbers every day through the month of July, Lighthouse Keeper Jim Dunkin and Gift Shop Manager Carol Talley were on hand to participate in the milestone moment and make the award presentation to the 100,000<sup>th</sup> climber.

Prior to automation of the lighthouse in 1949, lighthouse keepers made thousands of climbs to the lantern room to light or extinguish the lamp and perform daily maintenance duties. After 1949, U.S. Coast Guardsmen made the occasional climb to change the batteries that operated the modern beacon. When the lighthouse was decommissioned in 1994, only the rare curiosity seeker or lighthouse enthusiast attempted the increasingly treacherous climb.



Jeannie, Avery, and Karsyn Nauss with Gift Shop Manager Carol Talley

After the lighthouse collapsed on October 21, 2005, the St. George Lighthouse Association led the effort to reconstruct the lighthouse. Rebuilt at the center of St. George Island to protect it from continued erosion on Little St. George, the Cape St. George Light opened to the public in December of 2008. In five and a half years 100,000 individuals have replicated the climb up the 92 stairs and the eight-rung ladder to the top, just like the keepers of old.

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