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Fall 2015

## Replica Fresnel Lens Construction Underway

The magnificent third order Fresnel lens that has been absent from the Cape St. George Light for 66 years is about to return!



Buffalo lens built by Artworks Florida.

Dan Spinella of Artworks Florida is hard at work directing the design and construction of a replica of our lens, which will be displayed in the Keeper's House Museum. We expect

that the new lens exhibit will be installed in Spring of 2016.

Dan reports that the 149 prisms have been crafted, and that the components of the brass frame have been cut and sent to a sub-contractor for polishing. When all the pieces have been returned to his shop, he will perform a test assembly to make sure that all the parts fit together. Then the pieces will be shipped here for final assembly on site.

We have also ordered a reproduction lamp which is being built by lampist Kurt Fosburg in Michigan.

Our lens is very similar to the fixed white third order lens that Artworks Florida recently constructed and installed at the Buffalo Lighthouse in New York. View a video and photographs of the Buffalo installation at

this link:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Artworks-Florida/366538040079163>.



A similar reproduction lamp will be part of the Cape St. George lens exhibit.

Artworks Florida was established in 1992 to aid in the restoration of the first order classic Fresnel lens in the St. Augustine Lighthouse. The lens had been vandalized a few years earlier and the Coast

Guard was scheduled to dismantle and remove the lens from the tower. The Junior Service League of St. Augustine promised to raise the funds and find a way to restore the lens if they would be allowed to keep their historic lens in the tower. The lens was successfully restored and re-lit one year later.

During the following years, Artworks Florida was involved in the restoration of several classic Fresnel lens at the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse, and numerous other Fresnel lens restorations around the country. In 2003 the company began design and production of full scale reproduction lenses. These lenses are used

as interpretive exhibits in museums, and as private aids to navigation in many lighthouses around the country.

Fresnel lens replicas are manufactured by importing CAD drawings and 3D computer models to generate files for machining and waterjet cutting of the brass framework. The prisms are manufactured from acrylic material, which has a better light transmission percentage than glass and holds up well to sunlight and harsh coastal environments. The prisms are tinted to match the greenish hue of historic Fresnel lens prisms.

The naval brass frames are water jet cut and machined according to the computer model, sanded and polished to a mirror finish. The optical elements are set and glazed into the brass framework. The manufacturing technique replicates the process used to produce the historic lenses made in the 1800's.

Stay tuned for updates on the progress of the lens manufacturing process, and plans for introducing our fabulous new exhibit to our members!

## Students Work in Lighthouse Park

Six students from the Apalachicola Bay Charter School earned community service hours by doing volunteer



Top to bottom: Meredith Alford, Brooklyn O'Neal, Jack Vail, Carson Davis, Jayden Justice, and Weston Bockelman.

maintenance work in St. George Lighthouse Park on Saturday, November 14.

Jayden Justice (8<sup>th</sup> grade), Jack Vail (7<sup>th</sup> grade), Meredith Alford, Brooklyn O'Neal, Weston Bockelman and Carson Davis (all 6<sup>th</sup> grade) applied a coat of sealer to the park's benches and pump

house, which had recently been pressure-washed by SGLA Maintenance Director Mark Vail. All six students accumulated community service hours to apply for the new BETA club.



Mark Vail shows the students how to apply sealer.

The students received signed certificates of completion from SGLA. Many thanks to BETA club sponsor Lindsay Bockelman for arranging to have the students help out in the park. They did a great job!

# Tour of Homes Coming in February

Mark your calendars for the Fifth Annual St. George Island Tour of Homes which will take place on Saturday, February 13, 2016.

The tour is the major fundraiser for the St. George Lighthouse Association, and helps with the costs of maintaining and enhancing the Lighthouse, the Keeper's House Museum, and Lighthouse Park.

Seven beautiful island homes will be open for touring from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on February 13. This tour will feature two homes on the East End of the island, two homes in the Gulf Beaches area, and three homes in the St. George Plantation gated community. Please note that all of the homes require climbing stairs for entry.

The event will kick-off with an opening reception and presentation on Friday evening from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the Jay Abbott Firehouse on East Pine Avenue. Refreshments and a cash bar will precede a presentation on the turtles, birds, and amenities of the St. George Island State Park by Park Manager Josh Hodson. The kick-off event is free to TOH

ticket holders, and \$5 for others. Seating in the firehouse is limited to 160 attendees.



One of the homes to be featured on the 2016 Tour of Homes.

Tickets will be available at the Lighthouse Gift Shop starting in late December. Advance tickets are \$20, and tickets purchased on the day of the Tour are \$25. Docents are still needed to work three-hour shifts in the homes; please contact the Lighthouse Gift Shop at 850-927-7745 if you are interested in helping.

Please check the Tour website at [www.sgitourofhomes.com](http://www.sgitourofhomes.com) for additional information.

## ***Please Patronize Our Business Members***

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Suncoast Vacation Rentals  
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St. George Island Civic Club  
Jerry Thompson, Realtor



# Holiday Hints

1. Visit the Lighthouse Gift Shop for all your holiday shopping needs. Carol, Dawn, and Dottie look forward to showing you the lovely array of lighthouse merchandise, books for young and old, toys for the kids and grandkids, beautiful home accent pieces and hostess gifts, and fabulous jewelry for women, men, and children. Be sure to check out the selection of lighthouse and island ornaments!
2. Apalachicola author and SGLA member Lois Swoboda has published the second book in her Old Neb series, *Old Neb and the Ghost Ship*. The new book, which follows the highly successful *Old Neb and the Lighthouse Treasure*, finds the lighthouse horse involved in the secret activities of island rumrunners, and once again Old Neb saves the day! These books for young readers make great gifts for all the budding adventurers on your holiday list, and will introduce them to the exploits that may have taken place during the long history of the lighthouse. Signed copies of both books are available at the Lighthouse Gift Shop.
3. Pavers for the pathways in Lighthouse Park always make great gifts! Commemorate a loved one, a friendship, a special occasion, or the wonderful times you have spent on St. George Island with an inscription engraved on a brick paver and installed on one of the paths in the park. Pavers are \$50. Installation takes place approximately once every three months. Paver forms are available at the Lighthouse Gift Shop or on our website [www.stgeorgelight.org](http://www.stgeorgelight.org), under the Merchandise tab. Gift cards are available on request.



## *ABC School Students Visit the Cape St. George Lighthouse*

Students from the third grade class at the Apalachicola Bay Charter School visited the Cape St. George Lighthouse and the Keeper's House Museum on Friday, October 23.



Some of the third grade students are pictured with museum docent James Hargrove in the Keeper's House Museum.

Thirty-two students were accompanied by teachers Karen Ward and Jessica Ammons; para-professionals Crystal Gay, Tydron Wynn and Joy

Carrino; and several parents as they climbed to the top of the 77-foot lighthouse.

Museum docent James Hargrove, a retired professor from the University of Georgia, captivated the children with the history of the lighthouse from its initial construction in 1833 to its collapse in 2005 and reconstruction in 2008. Students especially enjoyed the tale of the wild goat recruited from the herd on Sand Island to pull the cart that Lighthouse Keeper Walter Roberts, Jr. bought for his children when they spent summers at the lighthouse in the 1930's.

Lighthouse Keeper Jim Dunkin assisted the enthusiastic youngsters with their climb up the tower, where they enjoyed the trek up the 92 stairs and eight-rung ladder into the lantern room, and the incredible views of the island, the Gulf of Mexico, and Apalachicola Bay.

# Range Lights in the Bay

By James Hargrove

*James Hargrove is a Lighthouse Museum docent and a retired professor from the University of Georgia who makes his home on St. George Island. James has graciously agreed to occasionally write an article on the area's lighthouse history for our newsletter.*



Pictured (above left) is the former St. Joseph Point Rear Range light off state road C30A near Port St. Joe, which is now a private residence. At right, the former Front Range light is displayed in the Gulf County Public Library.

On a recent trip to the Florida State Archives in Tallahassee, Carol Talley and James Hargrove found documents from the U.S. Lighthouse Service that indicated that the keepers at Cape St. George were not the only light keepers in Apalachicola Bay. In particular, the supervisor of the 8<sup>th</sup> Lighthouse District in New Orleans wrote to the Apalachicola River Entrance Light Station asking to know when John W. Montgomery had relieved the prior keeper of the Apalachicola Entrance Light, William H. Wright.

Although John Montgomery served as Assistant Keeper at Cape St. George, William Wright did not serve at the lighthouse. Florida lighthouse historian Neil Hurley noted that some keepers only tended range lights, which are pairs of beacons arranged so that ship captains can stay in the main channel at night by aligning the lights.

Mr. Hurley states that around the turn of the last century there were miscellaneous beacons and minor Lights in Florida that had their own keepers. For example, William W. Culle was the keeper of Apalachicola Bay Range Rear from 1888-1910, even though he couldn't live on the light.

Hurley noted that Anton F. Meyer (serving 1888-1893), James A. Williams (1893-1895) and William M. Quinn (1895-1908) were keepers of Apalachicola Bay Range Front Light. George F. Wefing was the keeper of West Pass Bar Range (Apalachicola) from 1902-1908. And James C. Chester was keeper of Apalachicola Bay & St George Sound Bulkhead Cut, 6 Foot Spot and Porter Bar Beacons from 1896-after 1912. Williams was also a keeper at the Cape St. George Light.

The keepers at Cape St. George were responsible not only for the lighthouse, but also for tending five beacons including the ones at West Pass and in Pilot's Cove behind Little St. George Island.

Visitors can see an example of Front and Rear Range lights in the city of Port St. Joe. The original Front and Rear Range Lights were located west of town on Beacon Hill. The Rear Range light employed a third-order Fresnel lens which was mounted on top of the keeper's house. After the light was discontinued in 1960, Danny Raffield purchased the structure in 1978 and moved it to Simmons Bayou off state road C30A. The lighthouse, now a private residence, is visible from the highway next to Presnell's Marina about a mile south of the turn off Highway 98.

The Front Range Light was also dismantled and was eventually placed in the Gulf County Public Library, where it is displayed in the Florida History room. The beacon employed a Fresnel lens that may have been a fifth order light, visible six miles at sea. The channel in front of St. Joseph Point had been dredged, and by aligning the two lights, ship captains could stay in the deepest part of the channel. The Gulf County Public Library is located on Cecil Costin Boulevard (Highway 71) in Port St. Joe and is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 10 AM to 6 PM.

# Fall Visitors to the Cape St. George Light

Three visitors from Denmark, Solveig Helene Nielsen, Hans Hansen, and Aase Bj. Hansen



stopped at our lighthouse in September during a trip that included stops in Iceland and the Southern U.S. From Iceland they flew to Atlanta; drove to Montgomery, Selma, and Natchez; followed the Mississippi River to New Orleans; then to Pensacola and east to Apalachicola and St. George Island; and finally down the peninsula to Perry, Ocala, and Orlando, where they caught a flight back to Denmark. We are proud that

the Lighthouse was a stop on their extensive tour!

A group of photographers attending a Nature in Focus Photography Workshop led by



southern photographers David Akoubian and Cecil Holmes visited St. George Island in October. Most of the participants came from Georgia, but photographers from Orlando and New Jersey were also in the group.

Lighthouse Keeper Jim Dunkin lucked out on October 23 when three couples visiting from

Oklahoma enjoyed a very successful fishing trip on the Apalachicola River. Wondering what to do with more trout and redfish filets than they could eat, the ladies stopped at the lighthouse looking for help. No lighthouse keeper would leave three ladies in distress, so Jim sent the ladies to wife Donna's office where she deposited the fish in the freezer. A fresh fish dinner – one of the benefits of working at the Cape St. George Light!



## Lighthouse Participates in Island Ham Event

Greg Lane, Vice President of the Panama City Amateur Radio Club, along with his wife Linda and Basset Hound Suzy visited the lighthouse on August 29 for a one-day amateur radio event called the US Islands QSO Party.

St. George is one of 480 qualified Florida Islands (and over 2000 in the U.S. states and territories) that are part of a ham radio program dedicated to “chasing” and “activating” islands. In ham parlance, chasing an island means that a ham radio operator makes contact with a station on the island. An island is activated when a station is set up on the island and other stations are contacted.

Greg planned to use the lighthouse as support for his radio antenna, but the lighthouse was closed due to lightning in the area on Saturday morning. Greg set up instead at one of the beach pavilions, using an Icom 7100 on battery power and a Chameleon Hybrid Micro with a whip. He operated for an hour and picked up five islands.





Greg prepares to drop line from the top of the lighthouse.

Joined by three other Panama City ARC couples after lunch, Greg decided to try again to set up an antenna on the lighthouse. He said that it was not as easy as it sounds! The 150 feet of line he took to the top of the light became a huge tangled ball which took 30 minutes to unravel. With assistance from his colleagues, he deployed a Chameleon Tactical Dipole Lite vee-style with the top about 55 feet up. He set up at the base of the light and worked four more islands.

Greg said that he had 23 contacts for the day and reached nine islands, which he estimates was a high percentage of the islands that were active.

Sounds like Suzy, the Basset, may have had more fun than anyone. She enjoyed the bed at the St. George Inn, went to the beach where she played in the sand and checked out the Gulf until the waves chased her back, and met many other dogs over the weekend.

Everyone enjoys the lighthouse and SGI in their own way. We hope that Suzy and her ham friends will visit again soon!

## Quick Blinks

- Lighthouse museum docent and history researcher extraordinaire James Hargrove will speak at the Apalachicola Historical Society on Thursday, January 21, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. in the Carriage House at the Raney House, 128 Market Street, Apalachicola. James' presentation will focus on little-known stories about the Cape St. George Light and St. George Island. The meeting is free and open to the public and light refreshments will be served after the presentation.
- There will be no Full Moon Climb in December, since the full moon falls on Christmas Day. Please visit [www.stgeorgelight.org](http://www.stgeorgelight.org) in coming weeks for the 2016 schedule of Full Moon Climbs.

## A Parting Shot . . . .



This spectacular shot of the full moon over the Cape St. George Light was taken during one of our Full Moon Climbs by professional photographer Earl Orf. Earl is from Minnesota, and often visits St. George Island during the winter months. Earl was kind enough to provide us this photo for our use in publicizing our always popular Full Moon Climbs.

In addition to the Lighthouse, Earl has shot other gorgeous scenes of the wildlife and scenery on the island. Many of his photos are available as note cards at the Lighthouse Gift Shop.