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Spring 2014

## Lighthouse Flagpole Dedicated on Memorial Day



The Memorial Day crowd in Lighthouse Park.

After several musical selections by the Franklin County School Band under the direction of Karl Lester, the ceremony opened with a 21-Gun Salute fired from three miniature cannons starting at 12 noon with shots spaced one minute apart. The salute of 21 minute-guns is a military tradition reserved for Memorial Day. After the salute, the United States flag, which had flown at half-staff since 8 a.m., was raised to full-staff by James W. Lambert Sr., U.S. Navy veteran and father of Jimmy Lambert who passed away in May of

The new flagpole at the Cape St. George Light was formally dedicated to island resident Jimmy Lambert in a Memorial Day Ceremony that attracted more than 200 people to Lighthouse Park on May 26.

2013. Cannoneers were Dennis Barnell, Fred Stanley, John Ficklen IV, and Joe Garrity.



Joe Garrity fires a cannon.



Flag at half-staff during 21-Gun Salute.

After a stirring rendition of the National Anthem sung by Josh and Karina Hollingsworth, nephew and niece of Jimmy and Rhonda Lambert, Rev. Themo Patriotis of the St. George Island United Methodist Church offered an invocation focusing on the sacrifice of American lives that we commemorate on Memorial Day. "The men and women we honor today have shown great love, not just for friends but for strangers -- for those they never met," Rev. Patriotis said.

Commissioner Pinki Jackel, who represents St. George Island and Eastpoint on the Franklin County Commission, thanked the Lighthouse Association and the



Commissioner Pinki Jackel

Lambert family for contributions to the park which has become the centerpiece of the Island community and spoke of the significance of Memorial Day. "We are reminded as those solemn shots rang out of those we have known and loved, those that we have admired and respected, and those that we will never forget for making the ultimate sacrifice one can make for the preservation of our freedom," Commissioner Jackel said.

Throughout the ceremony, the three flags atop the nautical flagpole fluttered in the welcome breeze, with the American flag on the main pole and the State of Florida flag and the flag of the United States Lighthouse Service on the yardarm. The flagpole was funded by friends and family members of Jimmy Lambert who wanted to see his memory honored on the island that he loved and where he and his family sailed, kayaked, fished, and welcomed friends. Alex Hinson, a longtime Lambert friend and neighbor on the island, said that when Jimmy and Rhonda arrived at their island home, the first thing Jimmy did was raise the American flag. "He was a patriotic American who loved his country and his flag," Mr. Hinson said, adding that he hoped the lighthouse flags would be "a symbol of hospitality and friendship."

Rhonda Lambert unveiled the plaque dedicating the flagpole, as SGLA Vice President Jim Kemp read the inscription: "In Memory of James W. Lambert, Jr. Love for God, Country, Family and Friends." The plaque is set in a piece of soapstone left from the construction of the deck on top of the Lighthouse, which in turn is set into a new brick paver pathway that leads to the flagpole.



Rhonda Lambert and Jim Kemp unveil the plaque.

Retired Coast Guard Chief Petty Officer Mark Vail concluded the spoken part of the ceremony with a reading of World War II veteran Howard Schnauber's moving poem "My Name is Old Glory."

And as it had begun, the program ended with additional selections by the Seahawk Band, as the large crowd dispersed with satisfying memories of a day dedicated to the valiant men and women who gave their lives in defense of our country, as well as to one of our own who lost his own brave fight a year ago.



Master of Ceremonies Jim Kemp addresses the crowd.



The Franklin County School Band with Director Karl Lester.



Alex Hinson talks about his friend Jimmy Lambert.



# SGLA Board Elected at Annual Meeting

Officers and Directors of the St. George Lighthouse Association were elected at the Annual Meeting held in Lighthouse Park on May 22, 2014.

Officers for 2014 are:

Dennis Barnell, President  
Jim Kemp, Vice President  
Terry Kemp, Secretary  
Phyllis Vitale-Lewis, Treasurer

Directors are Brant Banks, Dennis Barnell, Vito Bell, Bud Hayes, Bob Heide, Jim Kemp, Terry Kemp, Fred Stanley, and Phyllis Vitale-Lewis.

We welcome to the Board our newest Director, Brant Banks. Brant is a resident of Apalachicola and a history teacher at the Apalachicola Bay Charter School. His expertise in the fields of education and history make him an excellent addition to the Board. We thank outgoing Directors Richard Saucer and Kristy Branch Banks for their years of service.

Also at the Annual Meeting, President Dennis Barnell introduced new Lighthouse Keeper Mark Vail, who succeeds retiring Keeper Stanley Colvin. In his Lighthouse Keeper's Report at the meeting, Mark said that 2013 visitation to the Lighthouse was up by about 10 per cent over previous years. He also noted that more than 92,000 people have climbed the Lighthouse since its opening in December of 2008.

Gift Shop Manager Carol Talley announced the successful implementation of a Quick Books Point of Sale system at the Gift Shop, and invited members to browse the new summer merchandise in the shop.

Secretary Terry Kemp reported that as of the Annual Meeting date, SGLA membership stands at about 450 members.

## *Washboard Added to Roberts Family Collection*

Our museum has a wonderful new artifact donated by Teresa Thomsen, daughter of our dear friend and benefactor Bill Roberts. It is a washboard made by Lighthouse Keeper Walter Roberts Jr. (known to his grandchildren as Pop) for the use of his wife Bessie when they lived at the Lighthouse.

The washboard has a wooden frame and a piece of ridged glass on which to scrub whatever you were washing. Teresa said, "My memory of its origin is that Pop used a wood packing crate for the frame and went to the hardware store in Apalachicola for the glass. Mom used it from sometime in the 1920's until mid 1930's."

Thanks to Teresa for another delightful addition to the Roberts Family Collection!





# Photo Class Visits Lighthouse

The Franklin County Middle School Photo Literacy Class visited the Cape St. George Light on a chilly day at the end of March and enjoyed a tour of the Lighthouse Museum and a climb to the top of the Lighthouse. The trip inspired wonderful photographs, poems, and a collage of black and white monoprint images which instructor Lydia Countryman presented to the Lighthouse Association.

Below is a poem written by student Jessica Rudd in an acrostic format, where the first letter of each line spells "LIGHTHOUSE."

**L**ighting the way for ships and  
boats  
**I**magining the history in this  
place  
**G**reat heights with wonderful  
views  
**H**ome of the Keeper and family  
**T**hick walls of ancient bricks  
**H**elping sailors see  
**O**bviously a necessity  
**U**ndergoing all weather, yet still  
shining  
**S**tairs, 92 of them  
**E**xquisite pieces of the past



We loved having the Photo Class visit, and we hope that they and other students will visit in the future.

## VOLUNTEER ALERT!

**The summer season is upon us and we still have vacancies for docents at the Lighthouse Museum. Summer is our busiest season and this is a good thing – we get to share the history of our amazing lighthouse with many new people, and revenues from climbing and gift shop sales reach their yearly peak.**

**But with the coming of summer, we also say a temporary good-bye to many of our loyal museum docents who travel or leave the island to spend a few months in cooler climates. If you will be on the island for all or part of the summer, please consider spending some time at the museum as a docent. Carol, Adele, and Sandy do a great job in the gift shop, but with the increase in traffic, they really need some help in the museum.**

**Docents perform a valuable service by educating visitors about the lighthouse, answering questions about our island, and preserving order in a small space. You get to meet a lot of new people, most of whom are very happy to be vacationing on our beautiful island, and you can show your pride in what we have accomplished at our lighthouse and museum.**

**Docents can volunteer for a regular weekly shift - generally three hours - or fill in as their time is available.**

**Thank you to all our existing docents for the great job you do!**

# ***Comings and Goings***

We welcome new Lighthouse Keeper Mark Vail who joined us on May 1. Mark grew up in Franklin County, attended Apalachicola High School, and has a home on St. George Island. He is a retired Chief Petty Officer in the U.S. Coast Guard. His Coast Guard experience and love of the Cape St. George Lighthouse make him an excellent addition to our team.



Chief Mark Vail

Meanwhile, we sincerely regret the end of the 5+ year lighthouse career of Stanley Colvin. Stanley was our first Lighthouse Keeper who took a chance signing up when none of us knew what opening the Lighthouse to the public would be like. Stanley did a remarkable job of charting unknown waters, and helped us make the Lighthouse the success that it is today. We gave her a Lighthouse Keeper's hat,

which she didn't like much, but was sport enough to wear when the occasion required. We will miss Stanley at the Lighthouse (as will the lighthouse dog visitors for whom she always had treats) and we wish her well.

The Gift Shop is happy to have a new Sales Associate, Sandy Dixon, an island resident who has added her considerable marketing skills to the expert sales team of Manager Carol Talley and Sales Associate Adele Colston.

We say good bye to longtime Sales Associate Dany Ray. Dany and Marty sold their island home in search of a new adventure in the mountains of Brevard, North Carolina. They were both enthusiastic lighthouse workers and volunteers, and their departure has left a big hole to fill.

Sissy Ivey was a welcome short-term addition to the Gift Shop staff. Sissy worked part time at the Gift Shop before finding full time employment, and we appreciate her time with us.

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

Mason & Marilyn Bean, Realtors  
BJ's Pizza  
Blue Heron Group, LLC  
Kristy Branch Banks, P.A.  
Century 21 Collins Realty, Inc.  
Collins Vacation Rentals  
Island Adventures  
Island Outfitters  
Bobby James Roofing  
Journeys of SGI

Prudential Shimmering Sands Realty  
Resort Vacation Properties of SGI  
Sanders and Duncan, P.A.  
Pandora Schlitt, Realtor  
Thomas M. Shuler, Attorney-at-Law  
Survivors Bait and Tackle  
St. George Island Civic Club  
St. George Island Realty  
R.W. Thomas Construction Inc.  
Jerry Thompson, Realtor

## A Rite of Spring: Plein Air Art at the Lighthouse



Bill Farnsworth on the beach.

Once again the St. George Lighthouse Association hosted a group of Plein Air artists who were in the area for their annual Paint-Out in May. Joining us this year were James Hempel, who painted from the lantern room; Bill Farnsworth, who took his easel to the beach; and Katie Dobson painted the

a vantage point in the park. Also gathering of amateur artists, many of especially to follow the professional



Art patrons at the reception.

A reception honoring artists and

lawn of Lighthouse Park, and guests enjoyed beverages and delicious hors d'oeuvres prepared by Charolette Bacher of Sometimes It's Hotter Seasoning Company.

An exhibit of plein air paintings, entitled "Water Views," was on display in the Keeper's House conference room for the 10 days of the event.



James Hempel in the Lantern Room.

Cundiff, who lighthouse from participating this year was a large them out-of-towners who were here Plein Air artists.

patrons was held under a tent on the

## Lighthouse Volunteers Take a Sunset Cruise

Our friends at Journeys of St. George Island continued their much-appreciated tradition of treating Lighthouse volunteers to a sunset cruise on Apalachicola Bay at the end of May. What also seems to be becoming a tradition is initially uncooperative seas for the event! But unlike last year, when the only boating was across the Cut to Little St. George, this year we rescheduled the bay trip for a calmer day.

The event began with a visit to the Journeys shop for refreshments on day one, then reconvened on the bay several days later for a wonderful evening of cruising with the dolphins. And the sunset could not have been more spectacular!



# Lighthouses in the News

Here are a few updates about some of our lighthouse friends.

## Cape San Blas

Charlotte Pierce of the St. Joseph Historical Society gave us this update in a recent email: "As of now, we are in hopes that the CSB facility will be moved mid-July. Pilings have been put down for the lighthouse and oil shed and they are working on the pilings for the houses. The lighthouse pilings must cure for 30 days before any weight is placed on them." The Cape San Blas lighthouse, oil house, and two keeper's houses will be moved from their eroding location on the Cape to downtown Port St. Joe. We are all anxiously awaiting this historic move!

## St. Marks

Ownership of the St. Marks Lighthouse was transferred from the U.S. Coast Guard to the U.S. Department of Interior in a special ceremony on March 28, 2014. Former U.S. Congressman Allen Boyd wrote the legislation stipulating the transfer in 2006, and eight years of bureaucratic complications followed. One major delay was caused by the discovery of soil contamination by lead paint in the area around the lighthouse. The lighthouse is located in the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, which is part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the Department of Interior. Efforts to raise the million dollars needed for restoration of the lighthouse and keeper's house have begun, but Refuge Ranger Robin Will says that it is uncertain whether visitors will be allowed to climb to the top. But we know that anything is possible, and we hope that one day we will again see the gorgeous view from the upper gallery of the St. Marks Lighthouse.

## Round Island Lighthouse

Remember our friends from the Round Island Lighthouse near Pascagoula, Mississippi? Their lighthouse first collapsed during Hurricane Georges in 1998, and Hurricane Katrina wiped out their reconstruction efforts in 2005. In 2007 the city of Pascagoula decided to rebuild the lighthouse on a waterfront site in the city. A delegation from Pascagoula visited us in 2009, and the similarities in our stories were amazing. With a variety of grants to fund the project, they rebuilt the lighthouse using as much salvaged material as possible. Sound familiar? The reconstruction of the Round Island Lighthouse was completed in May 2013.

## Quick Blinks

- The Cape St. George Light celebrated Florida Lighthouse Day on Saturday, April 12, 2014 with free climbing of the tower. The final tally by Lighthouse Keeper Jim Dunkin was 310 climbers – a new record for Florida Lighthouse Day at CSG!
- As of the end of April, more than 92,000 people have climbed our Lighthouse since it opened in December of 2008. If past traffic trends hold true, the 100,000<sup>th</sup> climber should visit sometime around the end of July or early August. We will be keeping an eye out for this historic climber, and will celebrate the milestone in some special way.



- Our Lighthouse has been named a 2014 winner of a Certificate of Excellence from Trip Advisor, with a rating of 4.5 out of 5 stars! Here is a sampling of recent comments made by visitors: “Charming .... Extremely interesting displays.... The view from up top is great.... My kids thought it was the greatest thing ever to climb the steps and count them all.... A work of love for those who worked to bring it back.” Visit [www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com) , bring up St. George Island, and click on Attractions to see all the nice things that people are saying about our Lighthouse, Museum, Gift Shop, and friendly staff!
- The new flagpole has been the recipient of several special flags. Retired U.S. Navy Admiral and island homeowner John Stewart was instrumental in getting us a U.S. flag that flew over the Pentagon. It was accompanied by an elaborate certificate which we will proudly display. State Senator Bill Montford has provided us with a U.S. flag and a State of Florida flag that flew over the State Capitol in Tallahassee. We also have U.S. flags previously donated by Tary Gaylor and Bob Gardner. All are greatly appreciated.
- Thanks to Keeper Jim Dunkin for the two photos below. All in a day’s work for a Lighthouse Keeper!



Marcia Mathis, of Sen. Montford’s staff, presents flags to Mark Vail and Terry Kemp.

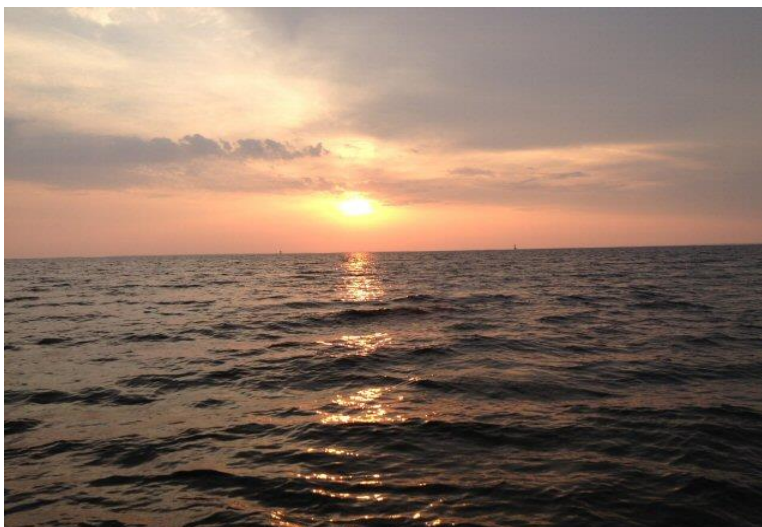


Nick Vargas and son Eli from Crawfordville. Eli said, “I like the Lighthouse!”



If this looks like some tranquil Caribbean anchorage, look again. These sailboats spent the night in our little harbor in early May. The great view of the Lighthouse must have attracted them!

## A Parting Shot . . .



The end of day arrives for Lighthouse volunteers on May’s sunset cruise.

It doesn’t get much better than this!