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Summer 2013

Buoy Lantern Added to SGLA Collection

The newest addition to the collection of artifacts housed in the Keeper's House Museum is a stunning bronze lantern used by the U.S. Coast Guard on piers and buoys from the 1940's to about the 1970's. The lantern was found in the Apalachicola Bay area and donated to the Museum by Jim Miller of Shadetree Towing in Eastpoint.

We originally thought that it might have been a marker associated with the ferry that once accessed St. George Island, but former ferry captain Joe Barber said that is not the case. We contacted Jim Claflin of Kenrick A. Claflin & Son Nautical Antiques in Worcester, Massachusetts for help in identifying the lantern. Mr. Claflin, a recognized authority on antiques of the U.S. Lighthouse Service and Coast Guard, identified the lantern as a 200mm Lovell BU-48 lantern.



It was electrically operated and required 12 volts DC, provided by batteries and later solar power. The spike on the top, which looks deceptively like the lightning rod on the top of the lighthouse, is actually a bird spike to keep seagulls from sitting on the lantern. Ouch!

Many thanks to Jim Miller and to Captain Dave Armentrout who cleaned the lantern and spent hours putting a terrific spit and polish shine on it!

Park Signage Completed

The final new sign in Lighthouse Park has been installed outside the Keeper's House. No more wondering about what's in that handsome red brick building next to the Lighthouse! The sign has an interchangeable panel for Summer and Winter Hours.

This completes the work done for us by Sauls Signs & Designs of Tallahassee, which included the large sign on Gulf Beach Drive, the sign at the Museum Door, the sign at the Lighthouse, a doorway sign at the Lighthouse, a Pooch Parking sign, rules and rates signs for the Lighthouse and Gift Shop, and the Keeper's House sign shown to the left.



Lantern Room Modifications Scheduled

The SGLA Board's Facilities and Maintenance Committee has been hard at work developing the best solution to the issues involved with the Lantern Room renovation. The problems they are tackling are two-fold: improving the visibility and maintainability of the lantern room windows, and improving the ventilation of the lantern room during the steamy summer months.

To that end, the committee met with renowned metalsmith designer Alex Klahm of Alex Klahm Architectural Metal and Design, Inc. from St. Petersburg, Florida. Alex visited the lighthouse in August to study the situation and offer a proposal for the job.



Metalsmith Alex Klahm (center) examines the lantern room with SGLA Facilities Committee members Mark Vail and Jim Kemp.

Alex is an award-winning metalsmith who has restored the metalwork on 21 lighthouses nationwide, including our neighbors Cape San Blas and Crooked River. He has been honored by the U.S. Department of Interior for his work on the Yaquina Head Light in Oregon, by the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation for restoration work at Tybee Island Lighthouse, and by the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation for work on the St. Augustine Lighthouse.

Many lighthouses, especially larger ones, were constructed with double galleries. Most of those that are open to the public permit climbers to go outside onto the first gallery and prohibit visitors from accessing the actual lantern room which may still house a Fresnel lens or other type of beacon.

Our lighthouse has a single gallery with a very narrow deck. For safety reasons, guests are not allowed onto the deck. Because our modern optic is small, there is plenty of room for visitors in the lantern room – but the polycarbonate windows have become scratched over time detracting from the view, and it sure gets hot up there in July!

The committee has decided to replace the windows with glass panes that may be more easily cleaned, though Alex warned that glass will dull also if not properly maintained and kept free from salt residue. A venting arrangement at the top of each of the eight glass panes is under consideration.

Work is tentatively scheduled for early December, and will most likely require that the Lighthouse be closed for up to two weeks.



Discussing options for modifications to the Cape St. George Light's lantern room are Mark Vail, Dennis Barnell, Alex Klahm, Jim Kemp and Jim Dunkin.

Letter to the Keeper – June 12, 2013



The following letter was received by Assistant Lighthouse Keeper Jim Dunkin, who especially enjoys sharing our lighthouse with young visitors. Jim reports that Harrison set a new one day climbing record by going up and down the 92 stairs SIX times – three times with Mom and three times with Dad. We hope that Alan and Lyn have recovered by now!

Dear Jim,

It was a pleasure to meet you today at the lighthouse. The kids really had a good time climbing up – and down – all those stairs. They also enjoyed the view from the top.

Good thing you shot a bunch of photos. As always with small children, it seems like someone was always looking the wrong way or making a funny face. Although Harrison isn't looking at the camera, this is the best picture.

Photo: the Meyer family (Harrison, Alan, Lyn, and Virginia) from Auburn, Alabama where Alan teaches history at Auburn University and Lyn works as a historic preservation consultant. Harrison (six) and Ginny (three and a half) rode all the way from the beachhouse between 5th and 6th streets to the lighthouse. They enjoyed the ride, and mommy & daddy enjoyed the fact that St. George Island is a kid-friendly environment with a nice bike path and courteous drivers.

This was our third year here, and we'll be back again for sure next year!

Alan

Thank You to Our Summer Museum Volunteers!

This year's busy summer season was a breeze for staff at the Keeper's House Museum and Gift Shop, due to the much-appreciated assistance of a capable and committed crew of Museum Docents. Led by Coordinator Pam Vest, these enthusiastic volunteers took the knowledge gained during the warm-up act of Spring Break and kept up with more than 7,000 visitors in June, July, and August.

In addition to entertaining visitors with stories about our lighthouse, the docents keep a watchful eye on the museum exhibits, help sell climbing tickets on especially busy days, and do whatever is necessary to allow Carol, Adele, and Dany to focus on sales in the Gift Shop.

Let's give a big THANK YOU to our summer docents: Ellen Ashdown, Jackie and Vito Bell, Jan Gardner, Mary Jean Heide, Linda Hockman, Barbara Iman, Mike O'Connell, Marty Ray, Sherri Roberts, Elaine Rosenthal, Glen and Manley Siler, and Penny Wilkens.

And of course, it couldn't have happened without the leadership of Pam Vest, who cajoled, communicated, coordinated, managed, scheduled, didn't complain, and made the summer work fun.

We say once again: Lighthouse volunteers are the greatest!

Planning for 2014 SGI Tour of Homes Begins

Plans are underway for the next St. George Island Tour of Homes, which is fast becoming one of the highlights of the island's "winter social season!" Mark your calendars for February 7 and 8, 2014. The weekend will begin with a reception and presentation on Friday evening, followed by the chance to visit some of the island's premier residences on Saturday.

Also included in the Tour will be the Plantation Clubhouse, the stunning structure that serves as the social and administrative center for activities in the St. George Plantation, and the Lighthouse and Keeper's House.

The Selection Committee is now in the process of collecting home nominations for the 2014 Tour. If you know of a special home that you would like to nominate, contact us at info@stgeorgelight.org.

We are looking for a mix of unique homes, from small to large, from beach to bay and in between, from the East End to Gulf Beaches to the Plantation. There are two caveats: 1) homes that will be for sale at the time of the Tour cannot be accepted; and 2) with many nominations expected, not all homes can be selected – but there's always the need to fill the pipeline for future years!

If you are interested in volunteering on Tour day, let us know that too. Many folks are needed to serve as docents in the homes and to work as drivers for the Plantation shuttle.

The Tour of Homes is a major fundraiser for the St. George Lighthouse Association. Proceeds help to maintain the Lighthouse, the Keeper's House, and Lighthouse Park.

Cape San Blas Gets Bids to Move Light Station

The Cape San Blas Lighthouse, our neighbor lighthouse to the west in Gulf County, is facing the same issues that imperiled Cape St. George and led to its collapse in 2005. Years of unrelenting beach erosion have chewed up the shore in front of the Cape San Blas Lighthouse and its two keeper's houses.

Inspired by the success of our reconstruction, supporters of the Cape San Blas Lighthouse plan to move it to the City of Port St. Joe, where the lighthouse with its oil house and keeper's houses will occupy a spot in a park bordering St. Joe Bay. Locally raised funds for the massive move have been supplemented by \$325,000 from the State of Florida.



This dramatic photo by Debbie Hooper illustrates the erosion at Cape San Blas over the nine-year period from 2003 to August of 2012. The lighthouse and other buildings are visible at the back of the photo.

The two keeper's dwellings have been temporarily moved to the back of the Air Force owned property to protect them from further erosion before a permanent solution can be determined.

Two bids for the project were received on August 29 and are under review, according to Charlotte Pierce of the St. Joseph Historical Society,

sed move from the Cape to downtown Port St. Joe,

and both are in excess of currently available funds. Charlotte said that an extension of the move deadline has been granted, and the project may have to be rebid. "We will just have to wait for the review to be completed. Hopefully, we will see progress soon," she said.

All of us at the St. George Lighthouse Association are anxious to see their progress as well, and wish them the same success that we were fortunate enough to experience.

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Quick Blinks

- Lighthouse Park will soon be getting a flagpole in a nautical style that will display the American flag on the main mast and two other flags, probably the Florida flag and a lighthouse flag, on the yardarm. Keep an eye on Lighthouse Park or stay tuned to the Fall Newsletter for more details.
- “Lighthouses & Living Along the Florida Gulf Coast,” the delightful book by Cape St. George Light friend and benefactor Bill Roberts, will soon be available again. When Bill unexpectedly passed away in November of 2011, the Roberts family reassigned rights to the book to the St. George Lighthouse Association. SGLA has been researching the ins-and-outs of reprinting the book, and we expect to place an order soon. The reprinted edition of the book will include a tribute page honoring Bill’s memory. The book will be available at the Cape St. George Lighthouse Gift Shop, as well as at other lighthouse gift shops on the Panhandle.
- The August Full Moon Climb set an attendance record with 32 climbers enjoying the sunset and moonrise on August 21. Assistant Lighthouse Keeper Jim Dunkin and Elaine Rosenthal, who will be hosting the Full Moon Climbs from here on out, said that climbers enjoyed a lovely end of summer moonrise from the top of the lighthouse. The September Full Moon Climb is on September 19, followed by climbs on October 18, November 17, and December 16. As always, SGLA members can participate in the Climbs at a reduced rate. Call the Gift Shop at 850-927-7745 to make reservations for this ever-popular monthly event.
- Check out the photo of Greg Lane from Panama City, a ham radio operator with call sign N4KGL who loves to come to Lighthouse Park to “ham it up” in the shade of one of our park benches. Greg visited the Lighthouse in June.



A Parting Shot



This photograph of the Cape St. George Lighthouse was sent to us by R. David Miller of Louisville, KY, who took the photo while visiting in the spring of 2012. He applied a dry brush technique to give the photograph a painted look. Mr. Miller said that it was their first visit to St. George Island, and that they can't wait to return! We thank him for the lovely photo.