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Winter-Spring 2016

Lighthouse Chili Team Wins Special Award

The Lighthouse Chili Team won the prestigious “Just Because We Wanted To” Award at the 2016 St. George Island Regional Charity Chili Cook-Off in March!

According to Chili Cook-Off Vice President Grayson Shepard, the award goes to the team that makes a special impact during the event. He credited the Lighthouse Chili Team for being the only local charity-type group that has competed in the Cook-Off for many years, and for being super easy to work with. “If it wasn’t for you guys, we wouldn’t have the lighthouse, which is by far the most iconic landmark for the island and to a certain degree for the rest of the area,” Shepard said.



Terry Kemp mans the Lighthouse Chili Booth while SGLA members Steve and Ronnie Haverick enjoy a chili sample.

This year’s team of competition chefs Vito Bell and Bob Heide and non-competition chef Skip Kemp were the 11th consecutive Chili Team to represent the St. George Lighthouse Association at the island’s Chili Cook-Off. SGLA started competing in the Chili Cook-Off in 2006, and in 2008 the group won the Best Booth Award for a clever booth created by former SGLA director Richard Saucer to look like (guess what???) the lighthouse.

The huge pot of non-competition chili with beans cooked up by SGLA President Skip Kemp sold out quickly and was served both as tasting samples and as a component of the team’s newest offering, “Frito Pies.” The popular pies feature Frito chips topped with chili and garnished with shredded cheese, chopped onions, and sour cream. This warm up act was followed by the smaller pot of beanless competition chili created by Chefs Bell and Heide – always anxiously awaited and quick to disappear.



*SGLA Chili Chefs Bob Heide and Vito Bell along with SGLA Secretary Terry Kemp receive “Just Because” award from Chili Cook-Off Chief Judge Lee Edmiston.
(Photo by Lois Swoboda)*

The SGLA crew set a new team record by raising \$317 for the SGI Volunteer Fire Department, the recipient of all Chili Cook-Off proceeds.

And we had a lot of fun on a beautiful sunny day on St. George Island and won a coveted award in the process. What’s not to love about that?



Ladder Truck 7 at the Lighthouse



Fire Chief Jay Abbott releases the halyard

Fire Chief Called to Rescue Flag at Lighthouse

Speaking of SGLA's support of the SGI Volunteer Fire Department at the Chili Cook-Off, Fire Chief Jay Abbott returned the favor when he brought out Ladder Truck 7 to rescue an escaped halyard on the flag pole in Lighthouse Park.

The drama started on a windy morning when a gust took the halyard that hoists the American flag from the lighthouse keeper's hand and sent it sailing to the top of the pole without the flag. The clasp that normally connects to the flag ended up stuck on the pulley at the top of the pole.

Called to help resolve the problem, SGLA President Jim Kemp was reluctant to shinny to the top of the 40-foot aluminum flagpole in the brisk wind, so he called Jay for assistance.

A short time later, Jay arrived on the 95-foot aerial ladder truck, stabilized it in front of the lighthouse, and the rescue operation began. Jay rode the bucket to the top of the flagpole and released the errant clasp in a matter of minutes, and soon Jim had Old Glory waving in the breeze.

The ladder truck with "St. George Island" emblazoned on its side is always a great source of pride to islanders who have long helped raise funds for our Volunteer Fire Department. And it was great to have two of the tallest icons on St. George Island -- the Lighthouse and Ladder Truck 7 -- together in a non-emergency display of community cooperation.

Thank you, Chief Jay Abbott, for your help!



The flag flies high once again

FIFTH ANNUAL TOUR OF HOMES HELD IN FEBRUARY

The St. George Island Tour of Homes on February 13 secured its status as the primary annual fundraiser for the Cape St. George Light with another record profit of \$15,000, slightly exceeding the final proceeds of the 2015 tour.



"A Dream to Sea" on the East End was popular with Tour visitors."

Estimated attendance of about 700 participants came from 28 states and Canada, and enjoyed a perfect day for visiting the seven lovely tour homes as well as the St. George Plantation Clubhouse and the Lighthouse and Keeper's House.

Tour weekend began with a capacity crowd attending the Friday evening Kick-Off at the Jay Abbott Fire House, featuring an excellent and entertaining presentation by SGI State Park Manager Josh Hodson, along with delectable home-made hors d'oeuvres, beverages, and an array of door prizes.

A new addition to the 2016 tour was the well-patronized hot dog cart operated by Mary Stutzman and husband David Smith of Apalach Hot Dog Co. Stationed near the Plantation shuttle stop in Lighthouse Park, Mary and David sold almost 200 "Chicago Style Hot Dogs" and contributed a portion of their proceeds to the Lighthouse Association. The all-beef hot dogs in poppy seed buns with toppings ranging from the usual mustard and relish to tomatoes and pickles were a hit with hungry tour visitors who appreciated a quick stop for lunch.

The 250-plus surveys returned by visitors heaped accolades on the homes, the transportation system, and the friendly volunteers. A drawing for two free tickets to next year's tour successfully incited more people to complete the surveys, but just like with big bucks lotteries, our winner from Hartford, Wisconsin, has yet to come forward!



"Dunestuck was featured on the 2016 Tour of Homes"

A huge thank you goes to the seven homeowners who so willingly opened their beautiful homes to tour participants, to our generous Business Sponsors and Individual Supporters who make a major impact on the bottom line, and to the more than 130 volunteers who drove their vehicles in the shuttle system or worked as docents in the homes or performed the many other tasks that made the 2016 Tour of Homes another resounding success!

Lens to Arrive in April

An installation date for the replica third order Fresnel lens has been set! Dan Spinnella of Artworks Florida will be at the Keeper's House on Thursday, April 14, to assemble and install the magnificent lens whose acrylic prisms and brass frame-work have been in production since last August.

Joining Dan that week will be our museum exhibit designer, Jerry Murphy, President of Murphy & Orr Exhibits of Forest Park, Georgia.

The plan is to re-work the exhibit that displays pieces of the original lighthouse to accommodate the lens in the northwest corner of the museum. Michigan lampist Kurt Fosburg has built a replica Moderator Lamp which will illuminate the lens and be a part of the exhibit.

Stay tuned for updates on the installation and plans for a special event to present the new exhibit to members, sponsors, and friends.



Membership Renewal Time

SGLA membership letters will be appearing in mailboxes this month. Our new membership year begins on April 1; current members will be asked to renew and non-members will be invited to join our organization.

St. George Lighthouse Association Membership Application Form	
Select a Membership Level:	
Student	\$ 10.00 _____
Individual	\$ 25.00 _____
Family	\$ 50.00 _____
Keeper	\$100.00 _____
Business	\$125.00 _____
Lifetime Patron	\$500.00 + _____
Name _____	
Address _____	
City _____	
State _____	Zip Code _____
Telephone _____	
E-Mail _____	
E-Mail is the least expensive way for us to communicate with our members. SGLA does not provide its e-mail list to any other organizations.	
_____ My employer will match my contribution.	
Contact them at _____	
Volunteers are needed to work at the Lighthouse, work as docents at the Museum, help with events, provide technical assistance with computer projects, do historical research, etc.	
If you would like to volunteer, tell us your preferences: _____	

Please consider upgrading your membership to a higher level, or even investing in a Lifetime Patron membership. Benefits of SGLA membership include free climbing, gift shop discounts, updates and quarterly newsletters, and a tax deduction for supporting the historic lighthouse.

Join the St. George Lighthouse Association Today!

The St. George Lighthouse Association was founded in 2004 to promote, preserve and maintain the Cape St. George Light.

When the historic lighthouse collapsed in October of 2005, the St. George Lighthouse Association spearheaded the effort to salvage the pieces and rebuild the lighthouse.

In a cooperative effort involving private contractors, state and local government entities, and hundreds of committed individuals, the lighthouse was reconstructed on St. George Island. It is located in beautiful St. George Lighthouse Park, and opened to the public in December of 2008.

A replica of the original Lighthouse Keeper's House has been built adjacent to the lighthouse, and houses the Lighthouse Museum and Gift Shop.

Funds raised through memberships, climbing fees, merchandise sales, and other sources help maintain the Lighthouse, the Keeper's House, and the park.

The St. George Lighthouse Association is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, and your contribution is tax-deductible.

A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling 1-800-HELP-FLA from within Florida, (850)410-3800 outside Florida, or www.800helpfla.com. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the state.

Lessons from Our Lighthouses

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.

No matter how much we might prefer a different outcome, all barrier islands and coastal areas move and reshape over time. This is a fact that coastal geologists now understand very well, but it was not at all apparent when the United States was a young republic and Apalachicola was founded.

When Florida became a territory of the United States in 1821, the federal government accepted responsibility for building lighthouses and for placing buoys as aids to coastal navigation. At the time, the Department of the Treasury was in charge of lighthouse construction, and the duty of locating sites for lighthouses fell to the local Customs Collector, who also served as Superintendent of Lighthouses.

In 1831, the U.S. Congress passed a bill to appropriate \$11,400 for “building a lighthouse on the west end of Saint George Island, near the entrance of the Apalachicola [*sic*] bay.” Even though the new Customs Collector, Gabriel Floyd, knew that West Pass was not a suitable location, the Secretary of the Treasury bought ten acres of land there for \$52.

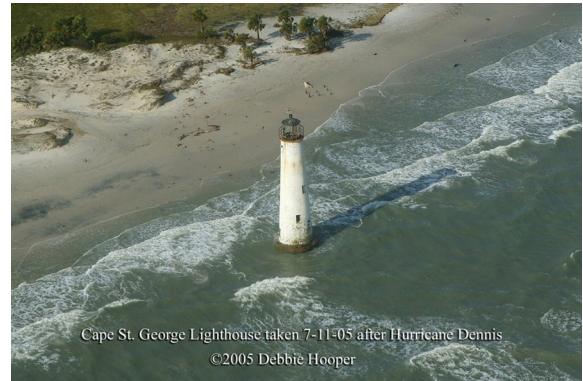
Superintendent Floyd argued that the lighthouse should be sited on Cape St. George, but Congress refused to appropriate more funding, and Massachusetts resident Winslow Lewis won the contract to build the lighthouse and keeper’s dwelling at West Pass. Not only did the first lighthouse lack a foundation of pilings, but the sand moved with every major storm.

Sea captains continuously complained about the poor location and quality of the 1833 light, and funds were finally appropriated to move it in 1847.

With the new appropriation, the Apalachicola Land Co. hired Franklin County resident H.F. Simmons to survey the island, and sold about 8 acres on the Cape to the U.S. government for \$150. The second lighthouse was completed at Cape St. George in 1848.

Although tides and currents move sand along barrier island beaches, sand that moves offshore with one storm usually moves back with the next one, unless the next one is a major hurricane.

This was the rule when the major hurricane of 1851 struck Franklin County and threw down the lighthouses at Cape St. George, Dog Island, and Cape San Blas. The next lighthouse on Cape St. George was built several hundred feet inland on strong pilings, and lasted for over 150 years until a succession of hurricanes from 1994 to 2005 caused it to be abandoned and finally collapse into the Gulf.



Lighthouse sits in the Gulf after Hurricane Dennis hit in 2005

Although hurricanes tend to move sand from the beach side of barrier islands into the bay, and often rearrange tidal inlets, the sand tends to move back during periods between major storms. Every resident of Franklin County knows that no hurricane has struck the area since 2005 (knock on wood, and fast!), and during that time, the beach at Cape St. George has built up again. A new delta of sand has formed due to ebb tide currents combined with westward movement of sand along the shore.

Had the lighthouse on Cape St. George survived 2005, it would probably still be standing on the Cape! In the long term, however, the dynamics of coastal change suggest that the old lighthouse would have collapsed sooner or later.



*Sands and surf swirl around the fallen lighthouse
(Photo by Debbie Hooper)*

PLEASE PATRONIZE OUR BUSINESS MEMBERS

- Aloha Bugs Pest Management
- Mason & Marilyn Bean, Realtors
- BJ's Pizza
- Builders by the Sea, Inc.
- The Butler Agency
- Century 21 Collins Realty, Inc.
- Collins Vacation Rentals
- Steve Harris, Realtor
- Island Adventures
- Island Outfitters
- Bobby James Roofing
- Journeys of SGI, Inc.
- Prudential Shimmering Sands Realty
- Resort Vacation Properties of SGI
- Pandora Schlitt, Realtor
- Thomas M. Shuler, Attorney-at-Law
- Suncoast Vacation Rentals
- Survivors Bait and Tackle
- St. George Island Civic Club
- Jerry Thompson, Realtor



SGLA Administrative Assistant, Billie Kinnett

Welcome, Billie Kinnett!

SGLA is proud to welcome to our staff as of March 1 our new Administrative Assistant, Billie Kinnett.

Billie joins us part-time to help with such responsibilities as mailings, newsletter production, meeting minutes, website updates, database up-keep, media relations, and the other activities that keep the organization running.

Billie is no stranger to our many members who reside in the St. George Plantation, having most recently worked in the Plantation office for the last 7 1/2 years. Billie and her husband "Ranger Mike" reside in the state park and both grew up in Central Illinois. Having moved here in 2003 from Illinois, they are very grateful to call St. George Island their home and enjoy their favorite past time of fishing.

We are excited about having Billie on our team and look forward to the addition of her tremendous administrative and technical skills. She will be a great asset to our growing organization!

Spring Full Moon Climb Schedule

April 21, 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

May 21, 8 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

June 20, 8:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Please call the Lighthouse Gift Shop at 850-927-7745 for reservations.



Sunset

Photographer Earl Orf shared these photos taken at the January 23 Full Moon Climb. Weather conditions were perfect for a gorgeous sunset and moonrise.



Moonrise

Quick Blinks

- Attendance at the Cape St. George Light set a record in 2015! A total of 19,501 people climbed the 92 stairs to the top of the lighthouse last year, surpassing the previous high total of 18,784 climbers in 2009, the first full year that the lighthouse was open to the public.
- The St. George Lighthouse Association will once again host an afternoon reception for Plein Air artists visiting the area for “Forgotten Coast en Plein Air, America’s Great Paint-Out” in May. Artists will demonstrate the plein air technique while painting on St. George Island on Thursday, May 12 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. The reception will follow in Lighthouse Park from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.
- SGLA’s Lifetime Patron member Joe Taylor visited the lighthouse with his parents and friends during a recent school break. Pictured on the stairs of Joe’s favorite lighthouse are Joe, friend Jole Nichols, and mom Deanna Taylor in the bottom row; and friends Glynis Simmons and Jayden Nichols, with Joe’s dad George Taylor in the top row. Joe may be our youngest Lifetime Patron, but he certainly is among the most enthusiastic!
- The Lighthouse Challenge tentatively scheduled for April, 2016 has been cancelled. Uncertainty as to the operation of the Cape San Blas Lighthouse necessitated the decision. Renovations continue at the Cape San Blas keepers’ houses and at the St. Marks Lighthouse, and we are hopeful that a Panhandle Lighthouse Challenge will be held at a future date.
- The Vega VLB-44 optic which lights the Cape St. George Light suffered an outage in February but is now back burning brightly. The beacon was shipped to the manufacturer in New Zealand, where a new drive board and upgraded software fixed the problem. The optic was reinstalled in the lighthouse on March 5.



Joe Taylor & Friends

A Parting Shot . . .

Flat Stanley visits the Cape St. George Light!!!!

The Flat Stanley Literacy Project

In 1994, Dale Hubert began the Flat Stanley Project in Ontario, Canada. Hubert had the brilliant idea of having children create their own Flat Stanley paper cutouts and mailing them to friends and family around the globe, in order to foster authentic literacy activities for kids and get them excited to write about Stanley's adventures. Hubert invited other teachers to take part by "hosting" Flat Stanley visitors in their classrooms as they arrived in the mail, and encouraging students to keep their own Flat Stanley journals. For more information on the Flat Stanley Project visit <https://www.flatstanley.com/about>



Flat Stanley visiting Cape St. George Lighthouse



Ranger Mike and Billie Kinnett with Flat Stanley at St. George Island State Park

Flat Stanley recently visited Cape St. George Lighthouse for a tour. Flat Stanley arrived via USPS from Illinois as a school project of David White, nephew of Billie Kinnett. Flat Stanley did many things while on St. George Island, but the lighthouse was the highlight of his trip and he invites everyone involved in the Flat Stanley project to include Cape St. George Lighthouse as a must see stop on St. George Island.