



www.stgeorgelight.org

Summer 2012

Lighthouse Digest Honors the Cape St. George Light

Lighthouse Digest, the acclaimed periodical dedicated to covering the news and history of the world's lighthouses, celebrated its 20th anniversary with its summer 2012 issue. To commemorate 20 years of advocating for the country's lighthouses, editor and publisher Tim Harrison identified the "twenty most historically significant lighthouse events in the past twenty years."

Included in the 20 events on the *Lighthouse Digest* list is the "Rebuilding of Cape St. George." This is a very noteworthy recognition of our efforts.

Consider this: *Lighthouse Digest*, based out of East Machias, Maine, was a monthly magazine until 2011, when it became bi-monthly. That's over 230 issues in 20 years. Each issue includes 10 or so feature articles about lighthouses worldwide – important stories about lighthouses destroyed, lighthouses saved, lighthouses sold, lighthouses named to the magazine's "Doomsday List" -- and stories about the thousands of people who have played a role in lighthouse history. That's 2300 stories. And of those 2300 stories, our story made the top 20!

Harrison says that two of the 20 events rank number one and two in importance: the Maine Lights Program, which concluded in 1998 with the transfer of 28 Maine lighthouses from Coast Guard ownership to non-profits or other government agencies; and the National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act of 2000, based on the Maine Lights Program, by which Congress allowed non-profit organizations to gain ownership of U.S. lighthouses. These two events set the stage for private preservation of these national treasures.

The other 18 events, Harrison says, are all equally important. So we rank with the moving of North Carolina's Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, the founding of the American Lighthouse Foundation, the establishment of a National Lighthouse Museum, and the commemoration of lighthouses on American coins and stamps.

That's pretty good company!

Paranormal Investigation

Did you hear or see anything peculiar the last time you visited the lighthouse or the Keeper's House?

A team from Emerald Coast Paranormal Concepts contacted SGLA with a request to do a paranormal investigation at the lighthouse just to see if any unidentified spirits have taken up residence in either building.



Jeff Wurst and Dee Burgbacher set up infrared cameras in the Lighthouse Museum.

On August 18, four paranormal investigators armed with static infrared cameras, digital recorders set to pick up low band frequencies inaudible to the human ear, and K2 meters sensitive to changes in magnetic fields set up their equipment to monitor activity in the Keeper's House.

Because of space limitations, they utilized hand-held sensing devices to investigate activity in the lighthouse.

The team consisting of Tracy Todd, Susan Todd, Dee Burgbacher, and Jeff Wurst began setting up at 7 p.m. and continued monitoring until 1 a.m. Sunday morning.

Although ECPC has not completed the review of the data collected Saturday evening, there were some preliminary indications of paranormal activity. This first investigation will enable them to set a baseline for paranormal presence, and subsequent investigations may be necessary to confirm any suspected activity.

A Friend Returns

Roy Ogles, former Stewardship Coordinator for the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve, has returned from retirement to once again become the liaison between SGLA and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, owner of the Cape St. George Light. At the August SGLA board meeting, Roy introduced Kim Wren, the new Stewardship Coordinator for ANERR. Roy has initiated a program for routinely scheduled safety inspections at the lighthouse, which is on the ANERR property register. We welcome Roy back to the CSG team!



SGLA Awarded TDC Grants

Once again SGLA has been awarded several grants by the Franklin County Tourist Development Council. A Sustaining Grant of \$20,000 will help fund the payroll expense of our two Lighthouse Keepers from October of 2012 through September of 2013.

The St. George Island Tour of Homes will once again be sponsored by SGLA and will be supported by a TDC Off-Season event grant in the amount of \$2,148. Half of the event grant funds are to be used for out-of-county advertising for the event, which is scheduled for the second weekend in February of 2013.

Toast the Full Moon



This shot of the full moon rising behind the lighthouse was taken by SGLA Vice President Jim Kemp using his cellphone. The photo accompanied the press release announcing the August Full Moon Climb, and was featured in the Tallahassee Democrat as well as in other publications.

Here is the schedule for Fall Full Moon Climbs at the Lighthouse:

September 30, 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

October 29, 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

November 28, 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Full Moon Climbs offer a view of the sunset and moonrise from the top of the lighthouse and include hors d'oeuvres and a sparkling cider toast to the full moon. Reservations are recommended for the Full Moon Climbs and can be made by calling the Lighthouse Gift Shop at 850-927-7745.

Visitor Center Changes

Changes are coming to the SGI Visitor Center. As of September 30, SGLA will no longer be responsible for operation of the Visitor Center, which we have operated under contract with the TDC for the past five years. Managing the lighthouse, the museum and the gift shop in the Keeper's House, and caring for Lighthouse Park more than consumes all the time and energy of this volunteer organization, and warrants our complete attention.

Also on September 30, Elaine Rosenthal will "retire" from her position as Executive Director of the Visitor Center. Elaine has managed the VC with boundless energy and enthusiasm since the center opened in 2008, and now plans to redirect that energy toward her garden and other interests.



Elaine Rosenthal cuts the ribbon to officially open the SGI Visitor Center on January 11, 2008, as TDC Chairman Paul Parker and County Commissioner Russell Crofton look on.

We will gather on September 25 at 6 p.m. at The Beach Pit restaurant on St. George Island to celebrate Elaine's career change and to salute the volunteers who have worked so diligently to make the Visitor Center such a success. Join us to thank Elaine and all the VC volunteers for the great job they have done!

Please Patronize Our Business Members

Marilyn and Mason Bean, Realtors
BJ's Pizza
The Butler Agency
Century 21 Collins Realty, Inc.
Collins Vacation Rentals
Steve Harris, Realtor
Island Adventures
Island Outfitters

Bobby James Roofing
Knorrwood Antiques, Gettysburg, PA
Prudential Shimmering Sands Realty
Resort Vacation Properties of SGI
Thomas M. Shuler, Attorney-at-Law
Survivors Bait and Tackle
St. George Island Civic Club
Jerry Thompson, Realtor

Quick Blinks

- July 20 was a record day for paid lighthouse climbers, with 295 people climbing the tower. Congratulations to Assistant Lighthouse Keeper Jim Dunkin who greeted the large Friday crowd!
- Thanks to SGLA member Jackie Bell, the Cape St. George Light is now on Facebook and Twitter. Look for our new social media presence or connect from the SGLA website at www.stgeorgelight.org.

- Welcome to new sales associate Dany Ray, who joins the Dream Team of Carol Talley and Adele Colston at the Keeper's House Gift Shop. Wonderful new items including colorful change purses, unique children's watches, tornados in a bottle, and an ever-changing selection of hand-crafted jewelry are coming in daily – so stop by to see Carol, Adele, and Dany and check it out!
- SGLA member Gayle Gmyrek gets a double thank you for her visit to the island this summer. Not only did she volunteer at the Lighthouse Museum on busy Fridays, she also hand-embroidered personalized cross-stitch bookmarks for each SGLA officer and director. Gayle said she did it to say thank you for the work we do, but we owe Gayle our gratitude for her continuing support and the unexpected gifts. Gayle and her husband visited from their home in The Villages, and encountered TS Debby who shortened their stay. The good news is they are coming back again in September.
- Islanders and visitors may have noticed that the playground in Lighthouse Park has been closed for several weeks, awaiting repair of some rusted grate panels by the County. A temporary repair should be completed soon, but the long range plan is to replace the equipment and move the playground to the area west of the bathhouse.
- Thank you to the family of Bill Roberts for donating a collection of U.S. Coast Guard patches and pins that were worn by Lighthouse Keeper Walter A. Roberts, Jr. We will mount the insignias for display in the Lighthouse Museum.

A Parting Shot



Bye-Bye, Hurricane Isaac. Surf continued to be high in the Gulf waters off of St. George Island as Isaac left the area and headed west. We were very fortunate to receive only a little rain, some wind, and moderate storm surge in low-lying areas of the island. A few downed palm fronds in Lighthouse Park are about the only evidence of Isaac's visit.