



# Cape St. George Light NEWS

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The Quarterly Newsletter of the St. George Lighthouse Association  
[www.stgeorgelight.org](http://www.stgeorgelight.org)

Summer 2010

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## Keeper's House Work Continues

Work continues on the Lighthouse Keeper's House Museum under construction next to the lighthouse. The exterior is substantially complete, interior work is moving along steadily, and landscaping was installed with the remainder of the State of Florida grant for Lighthouse Park.



The house is designed to duplicate as much as possible the original Keeper's House built with the lighthouse in 1852. The original Keeper's House became home to the Assistant Keeper and his family when a new and larger Keeper's House was built at the light station in 1878.

The building under construction is almost identical to the Keeper's House at the Cape Florida Lighthouse in Key Biscayne, and the plans from Cape Florida were used as the starting point for the Cape St. George project. Certain modifications to meet current code had to be made, such as the installation of 12

concrete pilings to raise the structure to the required height above sea level. The house has a central staircase and two rooms on each level. Each of the first floor rooms has a fireplace constructed of original lighthouse bricks.

The exterior of the house is red brick, which will remain unpainted for the foreseeable future. While it was typical practice at light stations to have residential buildings match the look of the lighthouse, island residents overwhelmingly expressed a preference for keeping the red brick house unpainted.

To camouflage the pilings, the architect for the project created a series of brick archways which give the exterior of the house a distinctive old-world appearance. The front porch, built by volunteers, matches that on the original structure, but the handicapped ramp on the west side will be disguised in time by plantings of confederate jasmine and other landscape materials.

The structure incorporates current construction technology to replicate a 19<sup>th</sup> century residence. The roof shingles are triple laminate asphalt, made to look like the cedar shakes that covered the original roof. The chimneys are stucco, grooved and colored to match the red brick of the house. Since the fireplaces are non-working, the stucco chimney option was lighter-weight and more cost effective than brick chimneys. The insulation sprayed into the walls and ceilings of the house is a fire-proof cement foam product which meets current fire code.

The interior walls and ceilings are covered in horizontal tongue-and-groove pine paneling, now being installed by volunteers led by SGLA President Dennis Barnell and Director Fred Stanley. The walls and ceilings on both levels will require 20,200 linear feet of pine boards. The floors will be made of wider heart pine planks, many of which were milled from a pine tree that was removed from the St. George Plantation. Much of the work on the lighthouse tower and Keeper's House has been done by

volunteers with an approximate 50,000 hours having been put in since the beginning of the project.

Two rooms of the house will be dedicated to museum exhibits telling the story of the Cape St. George Light. One room will house a gift shop, and the fourth room will be used for meeting space and storage. If enough funds can be raised, the building will open later this year. The St. George Island Visitor Center will remain in the existing building.

**PSSSST**....Want a sneak peek at the work going on inside the Keeper's House? Just go to our website at [www.stgeorgelight.org](http://www.stgeorgelight.org) and click on the photo in the bottom right corner. You will enjoy a portfolio of fantastic shots taken by professional photographer and SGLA member Lou Kellenberger.

## Climbers Love the Light!

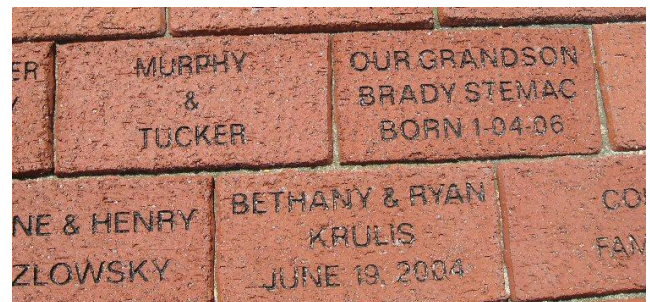
More than 28,000 people have climbed the Cape St. George Light since it opened to the public in December of 2008. Attendance in 2010 is tracking closely with 2009 numbers, and the climbers keep coming! In 2009 the lighthouse had 144 visitors from foreign countries, including Canada, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Italy, and Croatia, just to name a few. Comments from climbers are always enthusiastically positive, even as summer temperatures start to rise. Consideration is being given to installing a small portable air conditioner in the lantern room for use during the warmest months.



Lighthouse Keeper Stanley Colvin and guests.

## Pathways to the Light

Why are all those people in Lighthouse Park looking down at the ground? Because they are reading the inscriptions on the more than 600 pavers sponsored through the "Pathways to the Light" fundraising campaign! Inscriptions are funny, serious, happy, sad, and sometimes just plain weird. A paver in Lighthouse Park is a great way to commemorate just about anything – a birthday, wedding, graduation, great vacation, or loved ones.



Pavers are \$50.00 and can have inscriptions of up to three lines, 18 characters per line. Print the order form off our website at [www.stgeorgelight.org](http://www.stgeorgelight.org), or contact Terry Kemp at [fullmoon.sgi@fairpoint.net](mailto:fullmoon.sgi@fairpoint.net). Provided we have enough orders, the next set of pavers will be installed in late August.

## SGLA Officers Elected at Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the St. George Lighthouse Association was held outdoors at the base of the lighthouse on May 22. About 40 of the more than 300 members enjoyed hot dogs with all the fixins' grilled on-site by former Brick-Cleaning Chef Jim Kemp. Officers elected for the coming year were Dennis Barnell, President; Jim Kemp, Vice President; Terry Kemp, Secretary; and Phyllis Vitale-Lewis, Treasurer. Directors are Joe Bacher, Dennis Barnell, Vito Bell, Doug Brandt, Bud Hayes, Jim Kemp, Terry Kemp, Richard Saucer, Fred Stanley, and Phyllis Vitale-Lewis. Several awards were presented to members for outstanding service to the lighthouse in the last year. Jimmy Lewis, who is always willing to fill in for the keepers at the lighthouse, received the Lighthouse Keepers Award from Keeper Stanley Colvin. Fred Stanley, who has tirelessly spent hundreds of hours doing carpentry work at the Keeper's House, was presented with the Keeper's House Builders Award by President Dennis Barnell. Retiring treasurer Jim Kemp received the President's Award from Dennis in recognition for his service as treasurer since the founding of SGLA in 2004.

### Tags Help Florida Lighthouses

If you are a Florida resident, consider purchasing a "Visit Our Lights" license plate when your vehicle tag comes up for renewal. Sponsored by the Florida Lighthouse Association, the license plates provide a sustainable source of revenue for preservation of



Florida's remaining 29 publicly-owned lighthouses. Funds are allocated to lighthouses on a grant basis. Restoration projects at the St. Augustine and Boca Grande lighthouses were the first to be funded with license plate proceeds. You can purchase a "Visit Our Lights" tag at the office of your county tax collector.

### Let's Be the BEST!!!

There's still time to vote in the Best of Florida poll conducted annually by Florida Monthly Magazine. Just click on this link <http://www.floridamagazine.com/bofbalot.html> to vote in hundreds of categories including "Best Looking Lighthouse" and "Best Historical Landmark." With your support, the Cape St. George Light was the winner in both of these categories in 2009. Let's make it two in a row!

### Call for Volunteers!



The St. George Island Visitor Center & Lighthouse Museum

The St. George Island Visitor Center & Lighthouse Museum is always in need of volunteers to man the facility during open hours. Volunteers meet lots of interesting people and get to share with them information about our wonderful island. In addition, volunteers participate in quarterly excursions to different areas in and around Franklin County. Designed to introduce volunteers to new places and information that they might pass on to visitors, the outings are also always lots of fun. Destinations have included the Crooked River and Cape San Blas Lighthouses, St. Vincent Island, Camp Gordon Johnston, the Orman House and Gorrie Museums, Barbers Seafood, St. James Bay Golf Course – and even a trip out on the bay with the Seafood Workers to learn how oysters are harvested. All it takes to be a volunteer is a little time and a lot of enthusiasm. After a brief training session, you will be ready to go! If you are interested in being a Visitor Center volunteer, call Executive Director Elaine Rosenthal at 927-7744.



# Quick Blinks

- Wonder why the beacon on the lighthouse is not shining these days? The Cape St. George Light is a private aid to navigation approved by the U.S. Coast Guard, and is equipped with a Vega VLB-44 LED modern optic that flashes the lighthouse's traditional nightmark of a fractional white flash every six seconds. The light is turned off from May 1 through October 31 in deference to nesting sea turtles on the island's beaches and in the Gulf.



Visitors check out the Vega optic.

- Two couples (that we know of) have become engaged at the top of the Cape St. George Light. On Sunday, July 11, Michael Ruffino popped the big question to Raven Stephens after their climb to the lantern room. And of course, Raven said yes. The young couple is from Douglasville, Georgia and vacation on St. George Island several times a year. When asked why he chose to propose at the top of the lighthouse, Michael said that this was the first time they had climbed to the top and he knew that the beautiful spot high above the Gulf and Bay would make their engagement even more memorable! On June 22, Kenneth Shepardson and Cheree Lee of Niceville, Florida got engaged at the lighthouse. Lighthouse Keeper Stanley Colvin reported that it was a special and emotional experience for the happy couple.
- SGLA will join with the St. George Island Civic Club to sponsor lunch following the fall International Coastal Cleanup on September 18. The Cleanup will take place from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at 11 different sites in Franklin County, including “downtown” St. George Island and the State Park on the island. Teams will also work at locations in Apalachicola. Eastpoint, Carrabelle, Lanark Beach, and Bald Point State Park. Lunch for all participants will be served immediately following the Cleanup in the pavilions at St. George Lighthouse Park. Join in and help make our beautiful community even more beautiful! For more information, contact SGLA member Ada Long at [adalong@uab.edu](mailto:adalong@uab.edu).
- Be on the lookout for the new shipment of SGLA T-shirts due at the Visitor Center any day now. The artwork on the back has been updated to show the Lighthouse and the new Keeper's House, and we will even be introducing a new color!
- You may remember reading about the Round Island Lighthouse on the SGLA website. Located in Pascagoula, Mississippi, this lighthouse has a history eerily similar to our own. Built first in 1833 and rebuilt in 1859, it was toppled by Hurricane Georges in 1998. Reconstruction work was interrupted by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and at that point the Round Island Lighthouse Preservation Society working with the City of Pascagoula decided to move the lighthouse to a safer site. A team from Pascagoula made the trip to St. George Island to visit our lighthouse in February (see article on our website in Newline). The 12-foot-tall base of the lighthouse, weighing 250 tons, was all that was left standing after Katrina. It was moved by barge to the mainland on July 9. Check out their progress on [www.roundislandlighthouse.org](http://www.roundislandlighthouse.org).
- Thanks to all of you for renewing your membership in SGLA. We now have over 185 memberships, representing over 300 members! This newsletter, which you will receive quarterly, is one of the benefits of your membership.

## **Please Patronize our Business Members!**

The St. George Lighthouse Association is proud to have the support of a number of local (and one not local!) businesses. Please patronize these businesses when you are visiting St. George Island:

Island Outfitters  
Jerry Thompson, Realtor  
Journeys of St. George Island

Prudential Shimmering Sands Realty  
Sometimes It's Hotter Seasoning Company  
St. George Island Civic Club

And if your travels take you to Gettysburg, PA, call Knorrwood Antiques and say hello to Con and Janet Knorr. They are SGI Snowbirds and Business Members of SGLA. Their shop specializes in English White Ironstone China.

### **So Whaddya Think?**

We hope you enjoyed this first newsletter of the St. George Lighthouse Association. It has been a long time coming! It needs work, and the format will undoubtedly change in the months ahead. One thing it REALLY needs is a better name, and a better masthead. If you have any ideas, please let me know. Catchy names like "FLASH" (Florida Lighthouse Association) and "Keeper's Log" (U.S. Lighthouse Society) are already taken. Send suggestions and comments to Terry Kemp at [fullmoon.sgi@fairpoint.net](mailto:fullmoon.sgi@fairpoint.net). If we have enough interest, we might even make a contest out of "naming the newsletter," and the best entry could win a little prize!

A grateful thank you goes to Jackie Bell and Barbara Iman for help and moral support in the creation of this newsletter.

## **A Parting Shot....**



Special thanks to member Betsy Kellenberger for this fabulous photo of the Cape St. George Light.