

LIGHT READING



Quarterly Newsletter Spring 2017

St. George Lighthouse Association

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Cape St. George Lighthouse Still Doing Its Job

On April 8, 2017 around 1:30 PM a wildfire started by an individual burning leaves in the 600 block of East Pine Avenue fueled a fire in the buffer preserve destroying 68 acres, most of it public lands. Amazingly, no structures were burned and no injuries were reported thanks to the efforts of fire trucks from Apalachicola, St. George Island, Lanark Village, Eastpoint and Carrabelle in addition to Forest Service employees and sheriff's deputies. There was a total of 15 fire trucks and 3 bulldozers at the scene.



Photo by Franklin County Sheriffs' Office

Cape St. George Lighthouse Docent Jackie Bell was volunteering at the Lighthouse Museum on that day when a call came in from the U.S. Coast Guard needing more information about a possible fire on St. George Island. The Coast Guard had received reports of a fire on or near the Apalachicola Bay on St. George Island and they requested that someone climb to the top of the lighthouse to see if it was a vessel fire or land fire.



SGLA President Skip Kemp was in Lighthouse Park with Fish and Wildlife officers when he suggested they climb to the top of the lighthouse for a better view. Several hours later, Skip was still posted at the top of the lighthouse relaying information with FCSO radios as the FWC radios were not on the sheriff's frequency. Great job Skip.

Who would have imagined that after 184 years since the first lighthouse was constructed on Little St. George, this historic 77' structure would continue to assist the Coast Guard to assess the island and its waters!

A recent search on the internet found a comment from someone who asked if lighthouses are still relevant today or are they just photo opportunities for tourists? To all those who feel the purpose of the lighthouse has passed: on April 8, 2017 the Cape St. George Lighthouse proved to be a valuable and necessary asset for anyone within its site, especially the residents of St. George Island.

Thanks SGIVFD



Our thanks and respect go out to everyone that helped contain the fire or assisted in any way. We are so thankful that no structures were burned and no injuries reported.



Bud Hayes, SGLA Director and Volunteer Fireman

2017 SGLA ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING HELD IN LIGHTHOUSE PARK



President Skip Kemp reviews plans for the possible expansion of the Keeper's House and new museum exhibits



Director Bud Hayes does a fine job of grilling hot dogs to serve to the membership after a short business meeting. Mascot Fletcher the Bassett Hound keeps a watchful eye for any dropped dogs or crumb busting that is needed



On Saturday, April 28th approximately 40 members of the St. George Lighthouse Association attended the annual membership meeting. Members sat in the shade of the lighthouse and enjoyed updates on past and future projects. After a short business meeting, everyone was treated to grilled hot dogs with all the trimmings along with wine, beer, sodas and water.

Treasurer Phyllis Vitale-Lewis reported that the association is in excellent financial condition as we continue to grow and expand. Incumbent director Bob Heide was unanimously re-elected for a 3 year term as were current officers President Skip Kemp, Vice-President Vito Bell, Treasurer Phyllis Vitale-Lewis and Secretary Terry Kemp for another 2 year term.

Vice-President Vito Bell reported SGLA is currently interviewing candidates to fill the new position of Executive Director for the association.



PLEASE PATRONIZE OUR BUSINESS MEMBERS

- [Mason & Marilyn Bean, Century 21 Collins Realty, Inc.](#)
- [Best Western Apalach Inn](#)
- [BJ's Pizza](#)
- [Blue Heron Group, LLC](#)
- [Butler Agency](#)
- [Century 21 Collins Realty, Inc.](#)
- [Collins Vacation Rentals](#)
- [Island Adventures](#)
- [Island Dog Beach & Surf Shop](#)
- [Pandora Schlitt, Naumann Group Real Estate, Inc.](#)
- [John & Kristen Shelby, St. George Island Realty, LLC](#)
- [Suncoast Vacation Rentals](#)
- [Survivors Bait and Tackle](#)
- [Rick & Candace Watson, Century 21 Collins Realty](#)

Click on any of the Business Members to be directed to their Website or Facebook page

Reminder - Renew Your SGLA Membership

It's that time of year again to renew your Lighthouse [Membership](#). If you are not a current member we invite you to join in. Membership categories are:

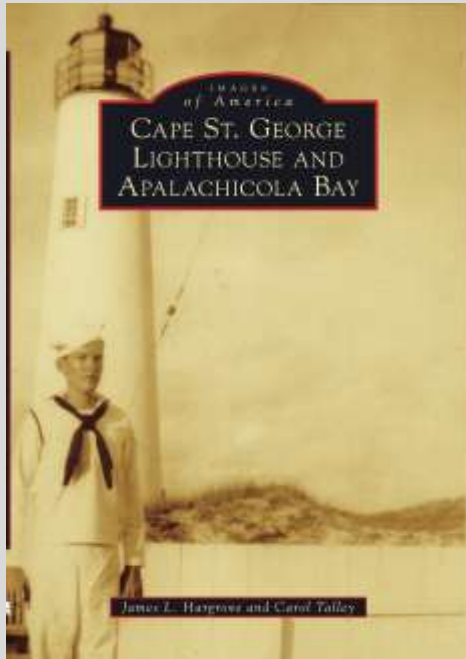
- \$25 for Individual Membership
- \$50 for Family Membership
- \$100 for Keeper Membership
- \$500 for Lifetime Patron Membership
- \$125 for Business Membership—includes business links on our website and quarterly newsletters

Your membership includes a 10% discount at the Lighthouse Gift Shop and members climb the Lighthouse for free.

Please visit our website for a membership form by clicking on [SGLA Membership Form](#) or email info@stgeorgelight.org for more information.

Authors Publish Lighthouse Book

Two St. George Island residents and SGLA members have written a new book that tells the history of the four lighthouses on St. George Island with emphasis on the men and women who kept the light burning in Apalachicola Bay for over 150 years. *Cape St. George Lighthouse and Apalachicola Bay* by James L. Hargrove and Carol A. Talley is now available as part of the *Images of America* series from Arcadia Press.



Aimed at all visitors who love lighthouse history, the new book contains over 200 vintage photographs and documents selected from the archives of the Cape St. George Lighthouse Museum, as well as unpublished images provided by families of former lighthouse keepers.

The book begins with photos and stories of families who lived at the lighthouse from territorial days until after the Coast Guard took control in 1939. For example, Braddock Williams and his descendants served at Cape St. George from 1854 to 1893 and then cared for the Crooked River Lighthouse and range lights from Eastpoint to Carrabelle. From 1893 to 1938, the families of Edward Porter and Walter Roberts Sr. and Jr. faithfully operated the lighthouse.

The Collectors of Customs in Apalachicola served as superintendents of the lighthouses from Cape San Blas to Dog Island. The new book includes early correspondence between the collectors and the U.S. Treasury Department, and shows documents such as contracts for the first lighthouses and a discussion of Mrs. Ann Taylor, who operated the Cape St. George lighthouse for several months after her husband died in 1850.

Notable events included the destruction and rebuilding of the lighthouse after the great hurricane of 1851, and the interruption in commerce caused by the Civil War. Commerce in Apalachicola Bay changed as railroads diverted the cotton trade down the river from Columbus while shipments of lumber and naval stores (turpentine and rosin) increased. Mechanical production of ice and new methods for packing seafood expanded the shipping industry, but shipping by rail and highway ended the era of river boats by the late 1920's.

The last two lighthouse keepers at the Cape St. George Lighthouse were Sullivan White and John Montgomery. Both men joined the Coast Guard when it took control in 1939 and served through World War II. However, after the lighthouse was automated in 1949, the Coast Guard stopped maintaining the buildings at the lighthouse reservation. Storms and blowing sand took their toll, and the old lighthouse was decommissioned in 1994. Members of the St. George Lighthouse Association salvaged the 1852 lighthouse after it collapsed in 2005, and rebuilt it about 12 miles east of its original location. The lighthouse, museum and gift shop are now located in Lighthouse Park at the end of the bridge to St. George Island.

Carol A. Talley has worked with the St. George Lighthouse Association since 2008 and has compiled information about our lighthouse keepers and the customs collectors who supervised them. James L. Hargrove is a lighthouse docent who wrote a prior book about William Popham, Apalachicola's "Oyster King," when he retired from the University of Georgia in 2012.

James Hargrove and Carol Talley's new book chronicles the history of the Cape St. George Lighthouse in relation to commerce in Apalachicola Bay, and introduces the many families who tended the light from 1833 until 1949 and is available for purchase at the Lighthouse Gift Shop.

Summer Docents Needed for Lighthouse Museum

Lighthouse Docent Coordinator Penny Wilkens is looking for volunteers to serve as docents during the summer months at the Keeper's House Museum. Duties include greeting guests visiting the Keeper's House and Gift Shop and sharing local history about the lighthouse and the area. Volunteer a few hours a week and enjoy telling everyone about our beautiful St. George Island and lighthouse. For more information, please contact Penny Wilkens at: 850-927-4298 or leave your name with any of the ladies at the gift shop.

Full Moon Climbs for 2017



The Cape St. George Lighthouse will again be open for Sunset/Full Moon Climbs in 2017. The schedule is listed on the right, and pre-paid reservations for the sunset and moonrise portion of the climb are accepted in advance for any climb dates.

2017 Schedule of Full Moon Climbs At the Cape St. George Lighthouse

May 10, 2017	8 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
June 9, 2017	8:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.
July 9, 2017	8:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.
August 7, 2017	8 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
Sept. 5, 2017	7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Oct. 5, 2017	7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Nov. 3, 2017	6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Dec. 3, 2017	5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Full Moon Climbs at the Cape St. George Lighthouse include light hors d'oeuvres and a sparkling cider toast to the full moon. Cost is \$15.00 for the general public and \$10.00 for members of the St. George Lighthouse Association.

After sunset, people are invited to climb to the top of the lighthouse for a breathtaking view of the full moon, as space and time permit. Cost is \$10.00 for the general public and \$5.00 for SGLA members.

Parking is available in lots at either side of the park. Because space is limited, reservations are recommended. For reservations or more information, please contact the Lighthouse Gift Shop at 850-927-7745.

Quick Blinks

- April 8, 2017 was Florida Lighthouse Day and we celebrated by offering free lighthouse climbs to all visitors. The Cape St. George Lighthouse had over 240 visitors that climbed to the top of the 77' lighthouse and enjoyed the spectacular view of St. George Island.
- The St. George Lighthouse Association will host an afternoon reception for Plein Air artists visiting the area for ["Forgotten Coast en Plein Air, America's Great Paint-Out"](#) on May 9th from 4-6 PM at Lighthouse Park. Artists will begin setting up around the park at 2 PM to demonstrate their different styles of painting and the reception will begin at 4 PM. Plan your day to see these talented artists at work.
- Another milestone was reached in March of 2017 when the 150,000th climber reached the top of the Cape St. George Light! Total climbers from the opening of the reconstructed lighthouse in December of 2008 through March of 2017 now stands at 151,302. 2016 was our best year ever — 21,395 climbers beat the 2015 record of 19,501.
- Need a great gift idea? How about purchasing a brick paver from SGLA to commemorate a special day, event or person in your life. Click the link below to open the Paver form.

[Brick Paver Form](#)

A Parting Shot . . .

St. George Lighthouse Association raised over \$400 for the St. George Volunteer Fire Department by selling chili samples and Frito Pies!



Competition Chili Chefs John Hadley & Bob Heide preparing our chili entry

2017 Chili Cook-Off



Crowds gather at the SGI Lighthouse Chili Tent



*Chef John Hadley, SGLA Director Bob Heide, SGLA President Skip Kemp
The Three Musketeers*