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The Lighthouse Log

A publication of the Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association
Members of the New England Lighthouse Association
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A Message from BLMA President. Richard Sullivan:

On what was one of the bleakest, most wintry, days of this past January, a group of 100 hardy souls arrived at Beavertail for a tour of the tower. This was the last of three lighthouse visits on that Saturday for these serious lighthouse lovers from around the Northeast. Read more about NELL.

Repairs funded in part with the Rhode Island Historic Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC) Grant are commencing. ABCORE Restoration has been awarded the contract and is getting started. The grant award sign is prominently displayed. More inside.

Another season for the museum is only weeks away! Agnes Filkins is hard at work scheduling docents. If you have not had the opportunity to serve as a docent, give Agnes a call at 423- 1464 and express your interest. Docent orientation will take place May 9th. Reminder inside.

Updating our exhibits is an ongoing task. Be sure to read the enclosed article by Varoujan Karentz with new information about Beavertail Keepers.

Don't miss Lanette's overview of our fund raising activities. Her enthusiasm for and devotion to Beavertail Light have aided immeasurably the development of our campaign,

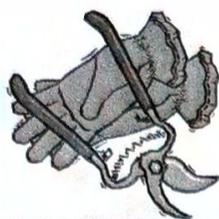
An exciting new project is underway at the museum. One of the most popular displays has been the one describing shipwrecks in the vicinity of Beavertail. Marine historian Jim Jenney has spent years researching shipwrecks and related maritime tragedies. We have his book, Shipwrecks of the United States, Vol 1 Rhode Island, in our Gift Shop. BLMA is working with Jim to archive his research of R.I. and adjacent waters at the museum and make it available to researchers, divers and the general public. I have often wondered about writers their backgrounds and sources of inspiration I hope you enjoy reading a little of Jim's background, I certainly did.

If your mailing label for this newsletter has a star on it, your membership has expired. Please use the enclosed form to renew. Every renewal of membership helps with our daily operating expenses.

May 7th is Clean Up at the museum, indoors and out starting at 10 am. May 9th is docent orientation. This is for veterans as well as newcomers. Again, 10 a m.

I look forward to seeing you at both of these events. Even if you can't stay , show up and say "hello".

Clean Up Day
May 7th '2009 at 10:00 a.m.



Docent Orientation
Sat. May 9th at 10:00 a.m.



J. F. Jenney, Marine Historian

Born and raised in Newport, Rhode Island, Jim was fortunate enough to have a family who had a great passion for the sea. The age of eight was a turning point in his life. Before then, the underwater world was visible only in short, breath-holding, moments. With instruction in SCUBA, he could remain underwater for longer periods of time and study all that could be found there. Armed with that ability and an abnormal curiosity for lost "treasure" fueled by books and movies such as "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea", the search began for that vessel with a skeleton at the wheel and sails still set.

A few years later, a much older diver and friend presented an interesting challenge by showing Jim an artifact retrieved from an unknown wreck site off Newport. The challenge was... could Jim find it and what ship was it. Diving on the site produced some clues but turning those clues into a positively identified wreck was a much more difficult task. About that time, Jim discovered the Newport Historical Society and soon found his free time occupied by the paper search for clues to his wreck. An entire world was opened to him as he learned of the "treasures" that lay in the old, faded and hand-worn newspapers that were kept there.

A very short time later he was given an opportunity that was truly life altering when asked by the Historical Society staff if he knew

of someone who would cart off a set of old Providence Journals which had, for some unexplained reason, been retained and bound by the city clerk of Newport. In a heartbeat, Jim offered to remove the unwanted materials himself and thus... a long career of reading old newspapers began.

Shortly after beginning research at the Historical Society (and before the windfall of the newspaper collection) Jim managed not only to identify the likely identity of the shipwreck which started this fascination, but uncovered the history of an additional six vessels lost in that area. To say that Jim was "hooked" for life would be an understatement. It wasn't too long before he realized that finding wrecks, although personally rewarding (not financially), was much more enjoyable through sharing the knowledge. And so another subset of this most interesting career was begun. Writing articles for magazines, a regular column for a local newspaper, and speaking to as many groups as would listen, Jim found new outlets to share his newfound knowledge.

Obviously, along the way Jim had somewhat of another "normal" life. He graduated from Rogers High School and headed off to URI to become a marine biologist, a trip down the wrong path as things would turn out. An affinity for numbers proved to be greater than an affinity for the bone structure of a fish and life took him to Bryant College where he graduated with a degree in Business Management. Working for a living was the next step with the ultimate goal of earning enough to afford that house in the suburbs.

But work and one's life work are not always the same thing and that was the case here. The research continued and newspaper articles and magazine articles led to the desire to write a book. Jim's first successful effort in this arena was "In Search of Shipwrecks" published in 1980 after a long search for a publisher. That was followed over the next few years by six other books by another publisher. All shared the common thread of shipwrecks, research, diving and related subjects (like a book on bottle diving in search of old glass). These, of course, were designed to make Jim independently wealthy but that didn't happen so working for a living was still the only option.

By this time Jim was married and somewhat

By this time Jim was married and somewhat settled down although still fascinated with his life's work. After studying the wrecks around Newport and Rhode Island... his interest expanded to New England and then, yes, he finally went over the edge and decided to capture data on wrecks around the world. An electronic database was the answer and literally tons of data made their way into it. But the capturing of data over such a large area as the world came at a cost... the time necessary to gather and document it precluded any real in-depth analysis of the data so Jim decided to return to his roots and focus in more sharply on the wrecks in Rhode Island.

His eighth book was a self published collection of information on wrecks in Rhode Island and is currently available though the number of copies continues to dwindle. As for the future, the current project with Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association is the singular focus of his work. With luck, and time, a reasonably complete history of the marine disasters of Rhode Island will be captured and placed where it can be shared by all others, divers and non-divers alike, who have an interest in Rhode Island and its maritime history.

NEW ENGLAND LIGHTHOUSE LOVERS

The New England Lighthouse Lovers (NELL) is an independent chapter of the American Lighthouse Foundation focusing on preservation of, and education about, lighthouses in the six New England states. Other chapters of ALF represent specific lighthouse preservation initiatives such as the Friends of Pomham Rocks and the Dutch Island Lighthouse Society.

Members have the opportunity to learn about lighthouses and lighthouse history through site visits and educational programs. Members become involved in fund raising and volunteering to preserve lighthouses and other important maritime sites. In the ten years that NELL has been in operation as a 501(c) 3 organization, they have given over \$120,000 for lighthouse and lighthouse museum preservation efforts. Members are to be found in all parts of the country. Two weekend membership

meetings a year are held at various locations in New England.

The first day is devoted to organizational business, raffles, door prizes and speakers. The second day is devoted to visiting nearby lighthouses and significant maritime sites, often gaining access to areas off limits to visitors as well as often closed towers.

The January visit to Rhode Island's Goat Island Light, Point Judith Light and Beavertail Light constituted the annual "Lighthouses, Hot Chocolate and You". Held rain, snow or shine in January, the event is an extremely popular way for members to reconnect. Organizational gatherings are scheduled at lighthouses and other sites throughout the year and multi-day tours are also frequently offered.

A quarterly newsletter, "The NELL Beacon" as well as membership information is available online. The January 2009, issue of the "Beacon" features a story about the adventures of some NELL members who visited a number of Alaskan lighthouses. NELL members don't impose any geographic boundaries on their adventures. Check it out at www.nell.cc



"Beaming" the Museum into the Future - in Three Phases

Lanette Spranzo Macaruso,
Fundraising Committee Chair

You may have heard the news: a presentation is coming together that shows our lighthouse museum in a *whole new light*: as a center for learning the principles of lighthouse science, technology, and governance. We think these lighthouse topics are as relevant today as they were during the days of keepers, lamps, and horns. Members of the fundraising committee have read a lot about Beavertail's history, particularly its founding as *The Newport Lighthouse* in 1749, its prominence as a site for tests of a new system of illumination in 1815, and its importance in sound transmission research and tests of foghorn (called sound-

signaling) devices between 1850 and 1900. We believe that focusing on these three key periods of Beavertail's past can guide the development of our future museum and its educational offerings.

This organizing effort has led us to a development plan in three phases. Phase One secures the buildings. Phase Two will expand the museum space. Phase Three will create Beavertail Lighthouse Museum's learning experiences and displays. Successfully completing each phase calls for a wide variety of supporters –people who bring their energy, and resources to our mission. Gaining their help requires an effective plan and the confidence that the BLMA can fulfill it. The realization of goals in each phase of BLMA's plan positions the next phase for success.

Phase One: Reach a fundraising goal of \$150,000 by December 31, 2009: The BLMA fundraising committee has begun this step, and preparations are progressing well. The funding goal includes \$50,000 needed to match the 2007 grant award from the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission for repairs that will "seal" the two keepers' houses against leaks and cracks. Restoration of external soffits, gutters and chimneys, internal walls and ceilings, and extensive repairs to both basements have begun. We think pictures we show of the cracked plaster and decrepit basement stairs and other problems will prompt people to support the projects of Phase One. We call it collectively ***The BLMA's Campaign to Save the Buildings.***

Phase Two will focus on expanding the museum space. We think supporters will feel great about helping to restore the buildings because of the unique museum space they will house. As we seek donations for the current preservation work, we are also showing that we've made effective use of funds recently awarded to BLMA for an education-oriented project: studying the original tower of the 1749 ***Newport Lighthouse.*** New information thus gained stimulates more research about that tower and the one that replaced it in 1753. We want to learn what the towers looked like, what kinds of devices they held, other buildings that functioned as part of the lighthouse, and events of the times affecting the people involved with them, especially Peter Harrison, the prominent colonial architect who designed the first tower, and probably the second. We also want to show

how inventor David Melville, the first American to be awarded a patent for gas lighting, built and tested his system for use in lighthouses at Beavertail. Although Melville's light beacon was about 4 times brighter than that produced by the whale oil lamps then in use, the U. S. Lighthouse system stayed with the existing contracts for lighting devices and fuels. The future museum will need adequate space to convey these chapters in U. S. lighthouse history, and Phase Two fundraising will support this expansion and prepare for the final phase in this campaign.

Phase Three will create learning experiences – displays and curricula - that will include platforms and content for learners to experience the disciplines of *lighthouse dynamics.* Participants will travel back and forth in time to see how applications of scientific, industrial, commercial, and public policy endeavors combined to make systems like those of lighthouses function. Principles of problem solving thus shown should connect to today's learning dynamics, particularly when you consider that Beavertail Lighthouse served for more than 200 years on a 24/7 basis! In keeping with that concept, many of BLMA's learning experiences are likely to be digital, so that learners can engage with curricula both inside and outside of the museum at times convenient for them. We can draw from a wealth of documentation, including annual reports of the U. S. Lighthouse Service, daily keepers' logs, and studies on the physics of light and sound, and other knowledge sources, to show the science, collaboration, hard work, and dedication that made lighthouses effective aids to navigation.

Phase Three educational design and delivery projects will call for much research, creative talent, and funding. But Beavertail as a part of our nation's lighthouse system had all of those in the past. It seems fitting, then, to provide new audiences with a unique knowledge base about the Beavertail light station and what functioned there in its heyday. We know, for example, that at least two large foghorn (aka sound-signaling) buildings equipped with sound-projecting devices were once parts of Beavertail Lighthouse. We want to introduce museum learners to the contributions to sound signaling made by Joseph Henry, America's leading scientist of the 19th century. Professor Henry's chief discipline was *natural philosophy*, or

physics, particularly terrestrial magnetism. Henry was also a respected public servant - the first director of the Smithsonian Institution. As was a 26-year member of the US Lighthouse Board, Professor Henry conducted or oversaw studies on sound transmission at Beavertail Lighthouse. He helped pave the way for Celadon Daboll to test his horse-powered foghorn system at Beavertail during the 1850's. This and other segments of history would be learning experiences unique to the Beavertail Lighthouse Museum.

These plans can become reality if we draw the support needed for each phase of development, and must begin with a successful campaign to save the buildings. To that end, we have begun sharing the presentation and the pledge cards that are part of Phase One. BLMA members will hear more about this campaign - at the museum, on the BLMA website, and, we hope, from a growing group of supporters. We ask you to please consider helping us with each phase of this mission of shoring-up the buildings, expanding the museum, and creating engaging learning experiences centered on the dynamics and people in the history of Beavertail Lighthouse. Ask any BLMA board member to convey your interest in fundraising to us. Your support is critical to our success.

THE SPOT LIGHT SHINES ON.....

This is a new feature of the Log designed to bring to light the many "behind the scenes" workers that keep BLMA going.



THE SPOT LIGHT SHINES ON.....

Clarise Willis, Membership Secretary. Clarise handles membership correspondence of all kinds as well as memorial and philanthropic donation thank you notes.. This is a big job that goes on year round.

Clarise is a faculty member retired, from the US Naval Preparatory School,, Newport, RI For 25 years Clarise taught physics and chemistry as

well as serving as science department head. In her retirement she has taught physics at University of Rhode Island.

Editor's Note: Lighthouses are rapidly disappearing all around the world, and with them goes an invaluable link to our past. Your membership will help a great deal to keep Beavertail Lighthouse, the third oldest in the United States, from following that sad pathway. Please talk to your friends, neighbors, and family members and urge them to join all of us who are thoroughly convinced that Beavertail Lighthouse is most worthy of our efforts to save it. Thanks in advance for sharing this membership application!

Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association

Membership Benefits

As a member of BLMA, you will receive our newsletter, email notifications of special events, a *10% discount* on purchases from our *gift shop* and discounts on *event admission fees*.

The following Memberships are available:

Family Life	\$300
Individual Life	\$200
Sponsor	\$100
Family	\$ 40
Individual	\$ 25

Please contact me about helping with BLMA projects and services.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email _____

Please make checks payable to: BLMA
PO Box 83, Jamestown, RI 02835

BLMA is a 501(c)3 non profit organization

Our Light House Keepers

Varoujan Karentz

This summer we will have a new and updated keeper list in the museum.

It may seem strange to say a "new" keepers list but most docents have noticed that while the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) took over Beavertail lighting responsibilities in 1939, none of the USCG keepers are shown on the "Keeper List" mounted above the visitor sign-in lectern in the museum's lens room. In addition, a number of errors in the old list were corrected and more information was added to show the management authority under which keepers and their assistants served.

The basis for the new listing was finding official U.S. Lighthouse Board records in the personal files of the National Archives Federal Records Center located in St. Louis Missouri. These records were copied and vault stored on 35mm micro-film. BLMA purchased a copy roll which included personal records of keepers and assistants of the many New England lighthouses including, Beavertail, Dutch Island, Newport Harbor, Block Island and Pt Judith. The records showed dates of service, salaries and reasons for transfer or termination. The National Archives New England Center in Waltham MA provided further information on keepers and their duties.

The records confirmed that Beavertail had two women keepers. Damaris Weeden was a Keeper for 9 years after her husband died in 1845 and Ann Shaw was the assistant to her husband Stlas Shaw in 1864 for five years. Damaris Weeden and her son were cited in the latter period of her tenure that the light was poorly attended and fell into disrepair. She was replaced in 1857.

The longest stationed keeper was U.S. Coast Guardsman Edward Donahue, who served a total of 33 years at Beavertail. He began his

service in 1920 as a member of the U.S. Lighthouse Service and transferring into the USCG in 1938. A photo of him hangs in the museum model room. The last keeper at Beavertail was Coast Guardsman John Baxter who was transferred in 1972 to another duty station after the light was automated.

Grant Status

Due to the economic situation, two major grants submitted by BLMA for Federal funding did not materialize this past year. An earmarked "Congressional grant" submitted through our Senators office was stymied along with many others and a grant application under the National Park Service (NPS) "Save Americas Treasures" program was graded satisfactory but limited funds precluded an award. The NPS has recommended that we resubmit our application for reconsideration for the 2010 budget year. We also have been invited to resubmit an application for direct Federal Appropriation through Senator Jack Reeds' office.

This spring there will be much activity on site. The Champlin Funds grant to restore and renovate the Granite Light Tower and the RI Historic Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC) matching grant to undertake repairs to the two keeper buildings are under contract. The contractor ABCORE Restorations Inc, who has done work at Beavertail, previously, plans to do much of the tower metal assembly and replacement panel work on the ground enabling docents and visitors to witness the restoration work. Metal assemblies and lantern panels will then be hoisted up to the catwalk for final installation... Meanwhile much of the keeper's buildings will be under repair, both internally and externally with the intent to seal the buildings from further moisture deterioration. Between the tower restoration work and the repairs on the two keepers buildings, over \$327,000 dollars will be expended.

Beavertail Light Station Keepers List (1749-1972)

*rst denotes First Assistant Keeper

Name	Dates of Service	Years of Service	Salary Per Annum	Why Vacated	Comments
Newport Colonial Government 1749					
Able Franklin	1749-1770	21			Member of original Newport Colony Lighthouse Committee
John Bowers	1770-1790	20			
US Lighthouse Establishment formed per order of President George Washington 1789					
William Martin	1790-1803	13		Died on station	Light transferred to US government 1795. Reported broken lens panes by sea fowl and driving winds
Phillip Caswell	1803-1818	15		Wife's health	Son-in-law of William Martin. Survived hurricane of 1815.
John Remington	1818-1818	1			Lantern lit by David McVillie's experimental gas system
George Shearman	1818-1829	11			Past ship captain
Sylvester R. Hazard	1829-1844	15		Resigned	First fog signal (bell) installed at Beavertail
Christopher A. Sweet	1845-1848	4			
Robert M. Weeden	1844-1848	4		Died	Replaced by his wife Demaris upon his death
Demaris Weeden	1848-1857	9	\$350	Resigned	1 st woman light keeper at Beavertail with assistance from her son who filled oil lamps and trimmed wicks each night
Joshua B. Rathbun	1857-1858	1	\$350	Removed	Cause unknown
1 st Henry Rathbun	1857-1858	1	\$300	Removed	Cause unknown
Silas G. Shaw	1858-1862	4	\$350	Removed	Cause unknown
1 st E.E. Taylor	1859-1859	1	\$300	Resigned	Cause unknown
1 st W.S. Spooner	1859-1859	1	\$300	Resigned	Cause unknown
1 st W.H. Carr	1859-1862	3	\$300	Removed	Cause unknown
1 st B.W. Walker					Cause unknown
William D. Weeden	1862-1862	1	\$350	Removed	Cause unknown
1 st Albert Caswell	1861-1863	1	\$300	Resigned	Cause unknown
Peter Lee	1862-1863	1	\$350	Resigned	Wife and six children living in keeper's quarters
Silas G. Shaw	1863-1869	6	\$600	Removed	Cause unknown
1 st Christopher Austen	1863-1863	1	\$300	Resigned	Cause unknown
1 st William Batchella	1863-1864	1	\$300	Resigned	Cause unknown
1 st Ann N. Shaw	1864-1869	5	\$400	Resigned	Wife of Silas Shaw
Thomas King	1869-1873	5	\$600	Resigned	Cause unknown
1 st Patrick McAssaram	1869-1869	1	\$400	Resigned	Cause unknown
1 st Andrew King	1869-1873	4	\$400	Promoted	Transferred to another station
W. W. Wales	1873-1895	22	\$600	Died on station	Previous keeper at Dutch Island Light
1 st Alex F. Fraser	1873-1875	2	\$450	Resigned	Cause unknown
1 st Charles Lake	1875-1875	1	\$450	Removed	Cause unknown
1 st George Brown	1875-1876	1	\$450	Perm. appoint.	Cause unknown
1 st George Brown	1876-1881	6	\$450	Perm. appoint.	Cause unknown
1 st George Brown	1881-1885	5	\$450	Resigned	Cause unknown
1 st John S. Wales	1885-1888	3	\$450	Resigned	Second son of W. W. Wales
1 st George B. Wales	1888-1891	3	\$450	Absolute	Oldest son of W. W. Wales
1 st George B. Wales	1891-1895	5	\$500	Promoted	Succeeded his father W. W. Wales
George B. Wales	1895-1900	5	\$600	Demoted	Unsatisfactory repair work at Beavertail
1 st John S. Wales	1895-1910	15	\$500	Resigned	Brother of George B. Wales
Joshua A. Overton	1900-1909	9	\$600	Perm. appoint.	Cause unknown
US Lighthouse Service Established 1910					
John A. Overton	1909-1915	6		Resigned	Cause unknown
1 st John S. Wales	1910-1915	5		Promoted	Cause unknown
John S. Wales	1915-1919	4		Resigned	Cause unknown
1 st George T. Manders	1915-1919	4		Promoted	Retired sea captain
George T. Manders	1919-1938	20		Retired	Total 24 years at Beavertail
1 st Stanley B. Roads	1919-1920	2		Resigned	Cause unknown
1 st Edward A. Donafue	1920-1938	18			Transferred from US Light House Service into USCG
US Coast Guard Assumes Responsibility of Lighthouses 1939					
Carl S. Chellis, BM 1 st Class	1938-1948	10	\$2028		Last daughter at Mackerel Cove during the 1938 hurricane. Transferred to Sabin Point Light, RI
1st Edward A. Donafue, BM 2 nd Class	1938-1948	10	\$1668	Promoted	Cause unknown
Edward A. Donafue, BM 1 st Class	1948-1953	5	\$2100	Deceased	Served a total of 33 years at Beavertail. Raised 11 children on site
1 st Dominic M. Turillo, BM 1 st Class	1951-1953	3	\$2100		Transferred from Rose Island Light, RI
Dominic M. Turillo CBM	1953-1966	11	\$2700	Retired	Transferred to USCG cutter Spar in 1958 and then to cutter Pt. Cypress before returning to Beavertail as keeper in 1960
1 st Ronald Bugenske, MM 2	1962-1965	3	\$2328		Transferred to Pt. Judith
1 st Calvin Hirsch, ENG 2 nd Class	1965-1969	4	\$2500		Transferred from Gull Rock Light, RI
John K. Martin CPO	1969-1969	unknown	\$4428		Temporary duty
George Light, ENG 2 nd Class	1969	3 mo	\$3300		Transferred from Woods Hole
John Baxter, BM 1 st Class	1970-1972	2	\$3815		Light automated. Last USCG officer in charge at Beavertail..... 1972
1st George Light, ENG 2 nd Class	1970-1972	2	\$3500		

All Hands on deck!!

May 7 - Clean up Day

10:00 a.m.

May 9 - Docent Orientation

10:00 a.m.

We'll be looking for you!!



2008 ★
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