



BEAVERTAIL LIGHTHOUSE MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

The Lighthouse Log

Autumn 2017

The Quarterly Newsletter of the BLMA

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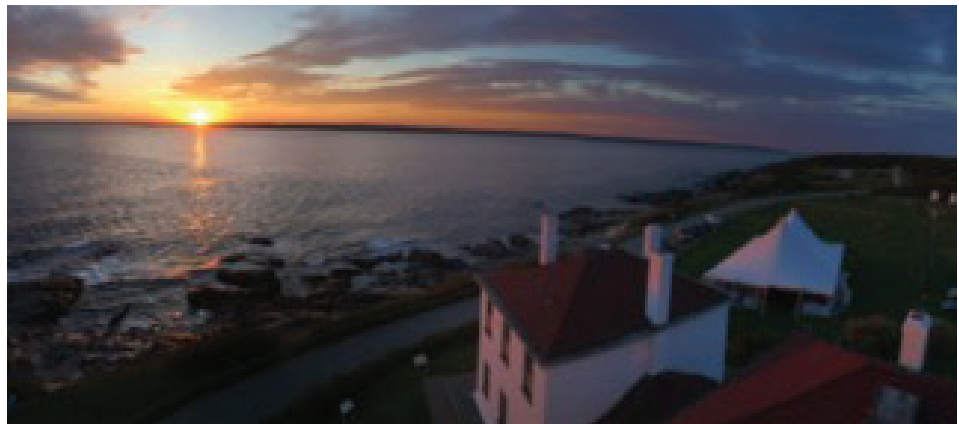
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Message From The Editor

Boats are winterized and fishing is winding down. One jumbo striped bass I caught will be in the photo collection for all time, but let's face it, summer fun is done. It's hard to face those inevitabilities each year. My love of Jamestown is tied directly to the bountiful gifts Narragansett Bay provides, and every autumn I get nostalgic about the past summer. They have been, almost without exception, wonderful. Nonetheless I do look forward to a change of seasons and autumn is a great change of pace: less traffic, quiet mornings and pristine beaches. Our winters aren't meant for everyone and can seem to go on forever. Still, I'd rather live here than anywhere else. Besides, now I have more time to prep each newsletter and work on fishing gear for another year.

Summarizing our 2017 season's accomplishments, in terms of sales, donations, visitors and museum enhancements is easy: spectacular! The facility refurbishments and display upgrades, numbers of visitors (from the entire planet!) and fundraising campaign results exceeded everyone's most optimistic expectations.

Our "Night at the Light" event on Oct 6 was an amazing success. Perfect weather, awesome food and many friends of BLMA enjoying what turned out to be the highlight of the season, all combined to perfection. The night was magical - an acquaintance echoed that very word afterwards. We are blessed to participate in this uniquely amazing landmark with other like-minded people. I have never known anything like it before, anywhere or at any time. And our many members and the throngs of visitors reinforce that feeling we all share.

The holidays are coming up soon and as always, we will host a Christmas Open House. This year it falls on the weekend of December 2nd & 3rd, and we will also open the following weekend. Museum facilities will all be available as will ample food & beverages on Dec. 3. And please help us keep our records updated with a current email and/or postal address!

Updated results for the \$500,000 Fundraiser campaign appear on Page 3. They speak for themselves. We could not have come this far without your thoughtful

Continued Page 2

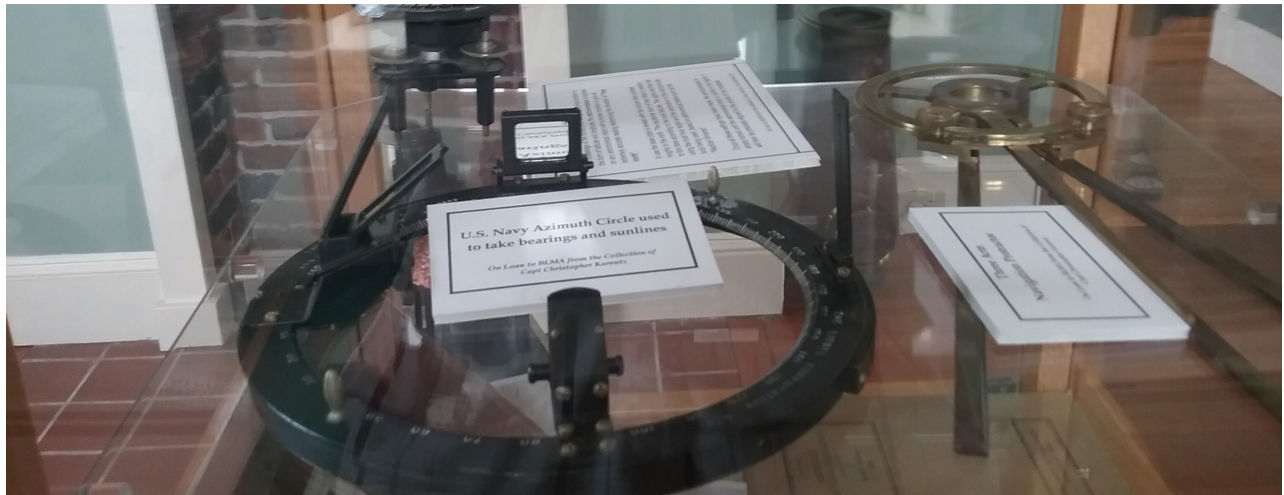
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interest in the Beavertail experience, and your timely donations. Most of all, we owe a huge debt of gratitude to Jim Buttrick for his matching contributions, dollar for dollar, from start to finish. He defined what this year has become, and re-defined the word benefactor. Looking forward inevitably to 2018, it's difficult to imagine another year like this one, which draws to a close far too quickly. There is still time to contribute to the campaign, and if you do so by Dec. 31st, we will receive matching funding from Mr. Buttrick.

But enough out of me. I'll sign off by saying thank you for all the kind words you extend our way, and your unwavering support. Please continue with your suggestions for improvement as well; we depend on your perspective and grow with your input. Our museum is a living venue, never static. Have a wonderful holiday season.

Warm regards,

Bob Dutton



Low Tech

We are privileged to display a representative sampling of historic navigation instruments, the likes of which mariners once bet their lives on. When they approached Newport, Boston Harbor or most any busy port in the world, lighthouse facilities comparable to our own guided sailors the last few miles. Visual and fog signals were far more than just guides into port, they were symbolic of the goal of all seafarers - safe haven and return to waiting families. Navigation was a far different matter in the middle of the vast oceans, thousands of miles away. The concept of GPS technology was unimaginable at the time. Dead-reckoning by any means was fairly inaccurate; determining ship location was a rough estimate at best. The need for more precise tools created markets for improvements, as ship owners and captains had a vested interest in seeing their vessel & cargo arrive intact. Sextants, astrolabes, azimuth circles and "astrocompasses" were developed. The optical and metals craftsmanship involved in their assembly were held in high regard. They were much more trustworthy navigation aids, enabling precise placement of ship bearing and position. Of course, ships were lost due to storms, fires and other causes, regardless of their navigation aids. Many of those which did not perish during shipwrecks were destined to become valuable collectors' pieces. In the center of our Richard Sullivan Memorial room there is a glass display case where some of these works of art can be seen. Along with a model of a horse-powered foghorn once used on site (yes, I'm serious) there are some beautiful samples of these timeless objects, and a brass protractor. They are currently on loan to the BLMA courtesy of Captain Christopher Karentz, son of board member Varoujan Karentz. The beautiful craftsmanship involved in their manufacture is clearly evident, and probably could not be duplicated today. Don't miss them on your next visit.

- BD



BLMA Fundraising Appeal

"Your Gift Today Will Have Twice The Impact"



As we approach year's end and a finale of the 2017 appeal, the magnitude of our historic fundraising effort is apparent. As of mid November, we have updated campaign totals including donations received via check, Paypal and GoFundMe. An additional \$150,000 in funding is still possible, but is tentative at this time. Our total including matching funds as of November 15th stands at \$450,000!

The 'Nite At The Light' was such a resounding success people are still talking about it. The event generated approx. \$30,000 from ticket sales, silent auctions and additional pledges. As we enter the final phase of the matching gift drive, the actual scale of this campaign becomes increasingly clear. BLMA reached out to numerous organizations and foundations, held two major fund raising events starting with the catered evening on June 15 at the Dunes Club in Narragansett, and then we really went to work. Publicity grew exponentially after newspaper, radio and network TV spots. These media events generated widespread public awareness of our campaign. And of course, on October 6, an evening affair transpired which won't be forgotten by anyone attending. Highlights of this "soiree" are covered in a separate article herein.

The response to all these efforts was beyond our wildest hopes. Our shared vision of locating vital funding to maintain and restore this historic landmark at Beavertail, which has come to mean so much to so many, is no longer an impossible dream. There is still a lot of ground to cover prior to the finish line, but it is attainable!

As the days grow shorter, our window for receiving matching funds shrinks as well. During the remainder of 2017, that window

is still open, albeit marginally, just enough to let in some fresh ocean air. We hope that as the holiday season unfolds, the final stretch of the campaign meets your goals as well. And, please stop by for some home-made refreshments on Dec. 3, 1PM-4PM during the Open House we hold every year. All are most welcome.

During exterior renovations we recently completed, we evaluated the condition of building walls. Some critical repairs we need to accomplish at Beavertail became even more evident as walls were examined. As winter nears the list will doubtless grow. So, please keep us in mind as this phenomenal year draws to a close. Every regular donation will be doubled by Jim Buttrick through New Years Eve!

Did you know that BLMA is able to accept donations of stock in lieu of cash? Or that if you are age 70-1/2 or over, you can make a donation from your IRA's required minimum distribution under certain circumstances? Please consult with your tax or financial advisor to learn more about these tax advantaged options, and if they are right for you.

- BD & DB

Suggested matched gifts:

\$50 becomes \$100! • \$250 becomes \$500! • \$___ Any amount will be doubled!!

Light And Fog Signal Problems

Beginning last fall (2016) Beavertail's Light and Fog signals had experienced a series of failures. Last fall's failures included an exploding utility pole power transformer and replacement of the entire tower mounted DCB-24 lantern and drive mechanism, which placed it out of service for over a month. From there, bulb and electrical equipment failures including the fog signal sensor have occurred. To make matters worse, experienced USCG Bristol RI technicians have been rotated to other locations, requiring new crews to gain familiarization of Beavertail's equipment. Both National Grid power surges and associated terminal corrosion are suspected in addition to aging electrical components. On the positive side, USCG has hinted that Beavertail may be upgraded with newer and more reliable LED lighting, similar to many other lighthouses.

- VK



RIHPHC Preservation Grant

By late September the RI Historic Preservation and Heritage Commission \$84,500 was completed. This matching grant was to seal water intrusion, prime and paint wooden surfaces, epoxy coat metal features and parge coat the sites four main site structures. The contractor, ABCORE Inc of Narragansett, who has performed work at Beavertail on a similar project in 2006 as low bidder on the competitive procurement, brought back the beauty of gleaming white walls and finished woodworked trim. The applied process replicates the annual lightkeepers "white washing" of the brick structures with modern coatings expected to last a decade between coats.

- VK

Courtyard Design

The Palmieri Charitable Trust, a non-profit entity with a history of promoting rose gardens in New England, and promoting Beavertail where the late Jerry Palmieri and wife Lelia were married, has provided a grant to BLMA. The grant will be used to create a professional architectural courtyard design concept in concert with BLMA's Master Plan.

With increased visitor attendance in addition to school group tours, an outside location for disseminating preliminary site information is envisioned. The site will be used to queue groups and as a visitor relaxation area courtyard. We are considering relocation of the present parking lot to allow removal of parked vehicles behind the buildings that will greatly improve the Light Station's appearance and return the site to an earlier era of open space.

Since a number of government state and federal agencies are involved in the approval cycle, the illustrated design concept and details once approved by the BLMA board will be processed through them.

- VK

Light Tower Donation Box

The newly added rotating light model donation box added significantly to daily donation receipts this past season. Donations placed in the tower often doubled and occasionally tripled the amount from the other boxes located in the museum. The model was modified and reconstructed by Guy Archambault, Alex Brincko, Varoujan Karentz and Ursula Michael.

- VK



Preservation Endowment Fund Status

This past September, BLMA transferred its first contribution amounting to \$200,000 into the perpetual Beavertail Light Station Preservation Endowment Fund. Parts of the amount included matching funds from benefactor James Buttrick. The fund is managed by the The Philadelphia Foundation. Accumulated annual proceeds will be deposited into a Donor Advised Fund designated solely for the preservation purposes of the Beavertail buildings and grounds and will be withdrawn as needed.

- VK



Nite At The Lite

The word awesome is an understatement for the October 6, Preservation Endowment Fund Raisher "Nite at the Lite." A sold-out event of over 200 supporters celebrating under a pink lighted tent with food, drink, music, a full moon and the rotating light beam from the tower was a majestic affair.

The magnificence of the evening was highlighted by a walk up to the light tower's catwalk. The shimmering moonlight on the water, table lanterns, a silent auction and solar path lights leading to the parking areas was a perfect footnote. This upscale event attracted those who realized they had to be there. The "Who's Who" of Jamestown attended this outstanding full moon venue with the realization that saving Beavertail for future generations was important.

A highly motivated committee organized by board member Nicole Contino, backed up by Committee Chair Lynn Roach and members Laura Allen, Eileen Donnelly, Fran Gammell Roach, Linda Warner and Varoujan Karentz brought together the best evening event ever witnessed on our island. Thanks also go to 12 local food and drink sponsors, 4 funding benefactors, the Roach family and its Kettlebottom photo team, and all those donating services including items for the silent auction.

It was an unbelievable evening never to be forgotten and most of all a financial success, matched by our own BLMA member Jim Buttrick.

- VK

Rhode Island's Perilous Coast Southeast Light, Block Island (Part 1)

One of the most dangerous points on the Rhode Island coast is the southeastern corner of Block Island. Although inhabitants lobbied for years to have a lighthouse built at that location, it was not constructed until 1874 and did not go into service until February 1, 1875. Over the years at least a dozen vessels have been lost at or very close to this point including four sailing vessels before the lighthouse was built and eight powered vessels afterwards. This is the first part of a three-part article about those wrecks.

One of the earliest prominent shippers from Providence was Nicholas Brown. In 1798, he and his partner, Thomas P. Ives had a stout ship called the ANN & HOPE built for the transatlantic trade. At the time she was considered one



of the most elegant and speedy vessels belonging to that port. Over the next seven years, the 550 ton ship made several voyages to far eastern ports and returned with cargoes that proved her to be a successful venture. Her sixth voyage was not to be a success. In November of 1804 she set sail for the East Indies via Lisbon, Portugal. On May 2, 1805 the ship departed from Batavia with a cargo of sugar, pepper and coffee. A few days later she encountered a gale and was compelled to put into the Ile de France to repair a leak. Several weeks later the ANN & HOPE continued her voyage after having \$20,000 worth of repairs performed. She was embargoed for another month when she reached

the Cape of Good Hope resulting in the decision to sail straight for Providence from there. On January 10, 1806, in a severe snowstorm, the ship approached the Long Island coast and her master turned eastward toward the entrance to Narragansett Bay. In the storm a miscalculation was made and the 119-foot long ship ran ashore on the rocks under Monhegan Bluffs, just to the west of where Southeast Light would later be built. Most of her cargo, with an estimated value of \$300,000, was lost along with the lives of three crewmen on the desolate shore.

Eighteen months after the loss of the ANN & HOPE, the 80-ton, three-masted ship BRUTUS met a similar fate in the same area. This accident occurred on June 27, 1807 when the two-year old ship was enroute from Liverpool, England for Newport under the command of Enoch Tobey. Although the nature of her cargo was not stated, newspaper accounts reported that the principal part of it was lost along with the vessel. There was no report of loss of life in this incident which was probably a welcome relief as she called Newport her home port.

Two decades would pass before another vessel would be totally lost in this area. On April 16, 1827, the schooner STRONG, with a cargo of plaster, fish and other items, ran ashore in heavy fog just off Mohegan Bluffs (note that the correct name of the bluff is Mohegan and not Monhegan as was reported in the account of the loss of the ANN & HOPE). The schooner was sailing from Newburyport, MA for New York City when she found herself fogbound as have so many others in this area over the years. It was reported that her bottom was stove in soon after she struck but the fish, along with her sails and rigging were saved before the vessel went to pieces.

On July 11, 1864, almost forty years after the previous total loss on the southeast part of Block Island, the Canadian schooner MAVILLETTE had the misfortune to run ashore in fog a bit to the eastward of the Mohegan Bluffs. She had sailed from Canso, Nova Scotia, with 225 tons of coal destined for buyers in New York City. The schooner was brand new at the time, having been launched in that year, and her loss was surely felt by her owners in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. About 70 tons of her cargo was saved before the vessel went to pieces leaving her bones among others who had come to their end under similar weather conditions.

After the construction of the lighthouse at the top of the bluff, there are no recorded wrecks resulting in total loss in this area for almost four decades and no other sailing vessels whose days ended here. In the next segment of this story you will see that the southeast point was not only a threat to sailing vessels...but to steamers as well.

- JJ

Shipwreck Database

As of 1 Oct, the shipwreck database available on both on our website <http://beavertailight.org/wrecks/index.html> and in the museum has been updated to include an incredible total of 2,550 documented maritime events. This project started in 2008 represents the largest shipwreck and maritime event database in Rhode Island. According to historian Jim Jenney, there are 1000 more identified events needing completion of individual data sheets to add to the database. These will require another few years of research and documentation.

- VK

Beavertail Aquarium

Just a few feet east of our lighthouse complex is the former fog signal building. Faithfully restored, including 2 simulated diaphone “foghorns”, the building is now occupied as a marine aquarium. Local fish and shellfish are featured as live exhibits, maintained by the RI Dept of Environmental Management employees. They also keep the park lawns and pathways in good order. Each year new stocks of tautog, flounder, sea robins, scup, puffers, sea bass, to mention but a few, must be carefully captured in nearby waters. The DEM maintains this “livestock” in temperature controlled tanks to avoid harming the fish, which are susceptible to health problems if the water gets too warm. Colder seawater may actually transported by hand up from rocks at the shoreline below the lighthouse in some cases. (Adding ice will not help as it dilutes salt water with fresh, and the reduction in salinity can be as harmful as warm water.) The exhibits are a favorite stop for children of all ages, and change every year. Visitors can walk to our museum just a few feet away, and combine both facilities for a fantastic day by the shore. Please include both venues in your next visit.

- BD

Conrad Rescued Off Beavertail

Recently we did a somewhat humorous, and completely fictitious, piece describing Charles Dickens’ visit to Beavertail for a picnic in the mid-1800’s. Well, the following ‘historical’ account is also fictitious but a bit more plausible (and based in part on “Youth” a short story by Conrad.) “Renowned author and seafarer Joseph Conrad, and a ship’s crew of 21, were rescued on Aug. 11, 1880, six miles south of Beavertail point. Bound for Newport with a cargo of 55 tons of coal, the “Anthracite” of Philadelphia registry was two days overdue for arrival at Newport. She was hopelessly adrift, and could not be guided once the masts collapsed after an explosion and fire. Crew members tried to smother the fire by covering the deck planking and caulking gaps in the wood to no avail. (The high-quality coal, usually very stable, nonetheless ignited from spontaneous combustion, gradually burning throughout the cargo hold from the keel upwards.) The esteemed Mr. Conrad, who had been given free passage as a tribute to his many tales of epic sea voyages, was rescued by the schooner “Curlew”, along with the captain, officers and crew. All were reported alive despite fractures and severe burns after coal gas exploded at one point, bursting up through the wood deck and splintering the base of each mast. The ship continued to burn down to the waterline after the rescue, and eventually sunk in 90 ft. of water. Mr. Conrad was only slightly injured and seemed calm following his rescue, reporting he looked forward to sampling the local cuisine, famous for quality seafood year round.”

The event is, mysteriously, not included in our Shipwreck database. However, this database is growing continuously, now containing 2550 marine disasters in the RI area. It can be accessed on line or at the museum.

- BD



BEAVERTAIL LIGHTHOUSE
MUSEUM ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 83
Jamestown, Rhode Island 02835

BMLA is dedicated to preserving America's third oldest light, providing educational experiences reflecting the best current thinking for all learners and engaging in fund raising activities necessary for enhancing visitor experiences.

Visit us on the web at
www.beavertailight.org

Cheryl Vislay
4506 Matthews-Mint Hill Rd
Matthews, NC 28105



Museum Hours

The Museum is open 7 days a week from June 17, 2017 thru September 3, 2017 - 10:30AM to 4:30PM.

After Labor Day, we are open weekends only
12:00 to 3:00PM through Columbus Day.

For a complete schedule and Tower Opening Dates
please see Visitor Information.

If you would like to schedule a tour of the
Beavertail Lighthouse Museum please call (401)
423-3270, or email us at info@BeavertailLight.org.

Group Tours & Events

To arrange Lighthouse tours for school or senior
groups please contact Mrs. Linda Warner at:

info@beavertail.org

Weddings and private events on the Lighthouse
grounds are not allowed by the U.S. Coast Guard.

For scheduling special events, including weddings
at Beavertail State Park contact the RI Dept. of
Environmental Management (DEM) at 401.884.2010.