



THE LIGHTHOUSE LOG

A publication of the
Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association
Spring Issue 2002

Beavertail Lighthouse
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A message from our president...

Dear Friends:

The time is drawing near for the Beavertail Lighthouse Museum to open its doors to visitors for the 2002 season. It has been a surprise to me how much work goes on when the museum is closed for the winter. All of our committees have been working diligently to get ready for the opening weekend and it is drawing closer by the minute.

Thank you to all who have sent in your renewals for 2002 and a friendly reminder to those who have not yet done so. Your support is critical to our ability to maintain the museum and to continually update the education of our visitor regarding lighthouses in general, and of course Beavertail Lighthouse in particular.

Jillian Meyer, Volunteer Docent Coordinator, will soon be calling our members, looking for volunteers for the summer season. If you have never been a docent, please give some thought to giving it a try. You don't have to commit to a day every week, as we need a list of standby volunteers who are willing to fill in for the regular. It is a wonderful way to spend 3 hours on a beautiful summer day, and the surroundings are among the most beautiful on earth.

I hope that all of you will come down to visit the lighthouse this summer to see Beavertail in its unmatched beauty. Please pass along the brochure you received with your new membership card to some one new to the museum and share the opportunity to lend a hand to those who share our intense interest in the Beavertail Lighthouse and its lovely museum.

Please note that Clean-up Day is May 11th. We can always use a few extra pairs of hands to spruce up the museum and grounds before summer schedules begin.

It is with deep regret that our Board accepted the resignation of the first President of BLMA, currently serving as our Vice President, Hugh Bucher, and his wife Board member and Archivist Ann Bucher, who have long been the driving force behind BLMA and its successes. Soon they will be moving away to New Jersey, and all of us wish them the very, very best in their new home. We'll be looking forward to seeing you now and again and will think of you fondly and often.

See you at the light!

Linda,
LINDA WARNER, PRESIDENT

Important Dates to Remember!!!



May 11 – Sat. Spring Cleanup
9:30 a.m. ALL HANDS
ON DECK!
PLEASE!!

May 18 – Sat. Docent Orientation
9:30 a.m.

Weekends only May 26 through June 16
12:00 noon until 3:00 p.m.

Daily June 17 – September 2
10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

Weekends only September 7 to October 14.
12:00 noon until 3:00 p.m.

COLLEGE BOUND

The W. Craig Armington Memorial Scholarship Committee - Linda Jacobson, Agnes Filkins and Don Barrows - is hard at work with the long process of reviewing the applications received for the 2002 awards. Ten about-to-graduate high school students met the April 1st deadline with their applications and requests to be considered in the 2002 award program and the committee is struggling now to narrow the number to two – each of whom will receive a \$1000.00 award toward help defray the costs of their college education.

This has been a rewarding program for BLMA and we have received letters of thanks from those who have won the scholarships in the past. We hear great reports about

their successes and are happy to be able to help them along the way.



Special permission from the US Coast Guard was granted for 60 members of the New England Lighthouse Lovers Association and BLMA members who were present to climb up to the tower in February. A rare opportunity to enjoy a spectacular view!

After walking tours of the Ida Lewis, Castle Hill and Rose Island lighthouse, 60 enthusiastic members of the New England Lighthouse Lovers Association, arrived at Beavertail Lighthouse and were treated to an experience that few have enjoyed in a long, long time. Beavertail Museum Association members joined the N.E.L.L. Association in a rarely offered opportunity to climb the light tower. They toured the Museum and swarmed the Gift Shop, and heard a knowledgeable and interesting report from N.E.L.L. member Douglas Bingham (also a member of the American Lighthouse Association). Mr. Bingham accepted an invitation to speak the 2002 Annual Meeting to be held September 17, 2002 at the Jamestown Library..

Groups climbed to the top of the tower in groups of four or five and Coast Guard ensign, Mardoohee Alexandre,



Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association

Membership, 2002

I would like to be an active part of the
Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association.
I have indicated my areas of interest
below.

- ☐ Volunteer Museum Docent
- ☐ Building Maintenance Committee
- ☐ Fund Raising Committee
- ☐ Nominating Committee
- ☐ Museum Clean-up Committee
(In May or during the summer)
- ☐ Group Tours Committee
- ☐ Publicity/Newsletter Committee
- ☐ Oral History project
- ☐ Holiday Open House
- ☐ Naturalist Program liaison
- ☐ Other?

Suggestions _____

Thank you for your support of our
mission

See you at the Light!!

Please check appropriate boxes.

☐ New Member

☐ Renewing Member

For Membership period ending
12/31/02

- ☐ Individual Member \$ 15.00
- ☐ Individual Life Member \$ 100.00
- ☐ Family Membership \$ 25.00
- ☐ Family Life Membership \$ 200.00
- ☐ Student Membership \$ 5.00
- ☐ B.L.M.A. Sponsor \$ 50.00
- ☐ Donation \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone: _____

Please mail with your check to:

B.L.M.A.
PO Box 83
Jamestown, RI 02835-0083

National Maritime Initiative Inventory of Historic Light Stations

BEAVERTAIL LIGHT



NPS photo by Candace Clifford, 1998

State: RHODE ISLAND

Location: CONANICUT ISLAND/NARAGANSETT BAY ENTRANCE

Nearest City: JAMESTOWN

County: NEWPORT

U.S.C.G. District: 1

Year Station Established: 1749

Existing Historic Tower:

- **Year Light First Lit: 1856**
- **Is the Light Operational? YES**
- **Date Deactivated: N/A**
- **Automated: 1972**
- **Foundation Materials: TIMBER/ROCK CRIB**
- **Construction Materials: GRANITE**
- **Markings/Patterns: NATURAL W/ BLACK LANTERN**
- **Shape: SQUARE**
- **Relationship to Other Structures: ATTACHED**
- **Tower Height: 45**
- **Original Optic: THIRD ORDER, FRESNEL**
- **Year Original Lens Installed: 1856**
- **Present Optic: DCB-24**
- **Year Present Lens Installed: 1991**
- **Height of Focal Plane: 68**
- **Fresnel Lens Disposition: FOURTH ORDER LENS ON DISPLAY IN MUSEUM IN ASST KEEPERS**
- **Has tower been moved? NO**

was on duty to temporarily stop the mechanism that rotates the beacon, for the safety of the visitors.

LIGHTHOUSES, HOT CHOCOLATE & YOU



BLMA members served a full array of homemade goodies and warm beverages to all on board and were as pleased as any one on the tour to have enjoyed such a wonderful day.



As the tour came to an end, Mr. Frank Carbone, co chairman presented BLMA president, Linda Warner with a check for \$250.00 and expressed the delight of those on the tour for a wonderful and much appreciated opportunity.

BLMA members staffed a booth highlighting the upcoming activities, at the Chamber of Commerce Business Expo on April 25, 2002,

We have received a complimentary membership to Rose Island Lighthouse and will be the backup tour for them on the days that it rains,

with two tentative trips already scheduled May 14 and 31, 2002. BMLA is a member of both Rose Island and Dutch Island Foundations, our nearby lighthouse neighbors.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS...

The time for membership renewals is NOW, and you should recently have received a reminder postcard to that effect. We hope that you will share the brochure that accompanied that dues notice with a friend or neighbor who may be interested in contributing to our exciting cause - keeping the story of Beavertail Lighthouse alive through preservation and education.

Membership is a necessity to any organization - and we can all appreciate that. Membership in the Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association is its life's blood and critical to our mission of preserving the past and educating for the future.

It has been on the grounds of Beavertail Point since 1749 and has been the beacon of safety to countless ships and their sailors.

Your assistance through membership is much appreciated and we treasure each and every member. We hope that you will send in your dues check, (if you haven't already) and encourage the folks you know to join us in this venture by becoming members, also.

BOARD NOTES

It might seem logical that when the Museum closes, the Board Members go home for the winter. However, that simply is not the case. The Board meets on a monthly basis, where successes are noted, what needs to be fixed, and plans are made to continually improve the Museum and keep the Gift Shop stocked.

According to the Board minutes of recent months, much is on the docket, including the completion of repairs to the rustic fencing which surrounds the Lighthouse grounds. Also included in the plans, are those for acquisition of materials pertaining to the Museum display

boards to keep them updated and interesting to viewers. A lighted nautical chart has been discovered that depicts all of the Rhode Island Lighthouses. It will replace the lighted board which has been in place for several years, but has been pretty much out of commission of late. rs.

A Certificate of Appreciation for his many services was awarded to Charlie Auld, Immediate Past President of the Association.

GIFT SHOP UPDATE

Susan Warszawski reports that the Gift Shop has been spruced up for the new season, with a new coat of paint, a more efficient arrangement and more attractive displays and credits Jill Meyer, Linda Warner and Laura Brasil for the great new look.

Laura will be on hand to keep the Gift Shop looking attractive and well stocked and will be in charge of keeping inventory in order.

Some of the old familiar items will be closed out this season with special bargain prices, so don't miss out – come down early to find your treasures like the golf caps, royal blue sweatshirts, and a number of other items and remember that when they are gone, they're gone. Shop early in the season and don't be disappointed.

A number of wonderful new items will be featured, a 500 piece jigsaw puzzle; a children's seashore discovery kit, a new book for your lighthouse library entitled Lighthouses and Lifesaving Along the Connecticut and Rhode Island Shore, a Scaasi miniature of Beavertail Lighthouse and new holiday ornament. Come on out to the Point soon and have a look for yourself. Beavertail's a great place to be!



BLMA's participation in the Annual Craft Fair in December was declared a financial success and the Holiday Open House at the Museum was well attended with lots of goodies and fun on hand.

The Chamber of Commerce included Beavertail Lighthouse Museum in its presentation at the Boat Show held in February.

Alan Bestwick, an amateur radio operation with "Lighthouses of the air" a part of the Amateur Radio Lighthouse Society, requested permission to transmit from Beavertail Lighthouse.

A BIT OF LIGHTHOUSE LORE

By Hugh Bucher

Beavertail Lighthouse has probably seen more types of fog signals than any other New England lighthouse station. A fog bell and tower installed in 1829 lasted only four years.

In 1851, an experiment was tried with an air whistle and an air trumpet, both operated by compressed air. The compressor was powered by a horse.

An 1851 report read "Fog seldom lasts all day. It will require about one-third of the time (during fogs) to work the horse, to keep up a regular series of signals." Reports were received stating that the new signal could be heard clearly at Fort Adams and other locations in Newport, six miles away. The only other American fog signal operated by a horse was at Little Gull Island, New York, about the same time.

A new steam whistle, first in the nation, was installed in 1857, then a fog signal driven by a hot air engine in 1868. The hot air engine was designed by John Ericsson, the builder of the famous iron-clad vessel, Monitor. A new compressed air siren went into use in 1900, replaced by diaphragm horns and finally by today's electronic fog signal.

The present signal is automated and is activated by a strobe light and a detector. When the intensity of reflected light from fog is strong enough to indicate the visibility is reduced to 3.5 miles or less, the fog signal sounds for approximately 5 seconds every half-minute.