South of the Border:

Yucatan Lighthouses

by George Feirer

Finding definitive information about Mexican lighthouses, if not impossible, is certainly extremely difficult. Rather than wait for some unknown purveyor of documented evidence to appear, my wife Patricia and I would like to share with you a few of our findings and how to get to them, if you happen to be in their neighborhood.

Over the years, while continuing our research on the Mayan civilization and the natural history of the Yucatan Peninsula, we have serendipitously come across a few Faros that added “icing to the cake.”

The beautiful old city of Merida, whose date of origin is 50 years after Columbus hit the New World, is an excellent arrival point in the State of Yucatan, on the peninsula of the same name. It is only a little over an hour flying time from Miami. I won’t go into the many restaurants, hotels, shops and other places of interest to visit, except to say there is a magnificent Museum of Anthropology on the Poseo de Montejo that should be a must for every visitor. We have personally enjoyed many of these venues.

One original foray to the north of the city, accompanied by a Meridano lawyer friend of ours was to the Mayan ruins at Dzibilchaltum of Progreso. This was still only a little over 30 kilometers from Merida; somewhat less than 30 miles. If a car isn’t available, a public bus travels the route from Merida to Progreso and, as the lighthouse is not a long walking distance from the bus route, this is a distinct possibility. However, you might want to see the concrete pier, which is reputed to be the world’s longest at about 2 KM. In its early days it was a major shipping locale for the export of henequen (agave) fibers used in rope making. A stroll down the Malecon is pleasant and the beach is delightful. A car helps to take you a little further to Chixulub, which is really a summer resort for wealthy Meridano businessmen, but in the off-season is usually deserted. There is evidence off-shore of Chixulub of a meteoric crater, the impact of which is currently being touted as the cause of the demise of the dinosaurs.

Mayan ruins “lighthouse”
(lookout on south end of the Isla Mujeres)
Photo by George Feirer

The Progreso Lighthouse is just a few blocks from the pier. Construction started in 1885 and the light was completed in 1891. It is 40 meters high (slightly over 131 feet). Originally lit with kerosene, it went through an acetylene gas stage and in 1923 was electrified. It now has a 1,000 watt source of light that is backed up by a generator if the local electric service is interrupted. It is open to the public from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. If
you are fortunate enough to be there at the right time, a small gratuity would be in order for the keeper. Salaries in Mexico, even among professionals, are not high, so any acknowledgement of services is greatly appreciated.

A great tourist destination in recent years is Cancun, with all of its magnificent hotels, restaurants, and “fun in the sun” activities. It is, however, expensive and often over-booked. For those who spend some time on the Caribbean side of the peninsula, in the Mexican State of Quintano Roo, there are several lighthouses in the immediate vicinity of Cancun.

Assuming you are already in Cancun, having arrived either by bus or car from Merida, or flying in to the Cancun Airport from almost anywhere, your first lighthouse is at Punta Cancun. This is on the beach side of the Hoteles Camino Real, a Gran Turismo (better than the best) watering hole and provider of the good things in life. The hotel is a short walking distance from public transportation along the Boulevard Kukulcan, or a cab is always available. You can walk through the hotel lobby and out onto the beach. After maneuvering around the reclining sunbathers, you can get right to the base of the cylindrical concrete tower. The door is barred and the lantern has been removed. The modern optic looks a little anemic, but it serves its purpose of marking the southwest side of the entrance to Mujeres Bay. As a day-mark, it is a rather stark, pure white, cylinder.

Cancun is also the location of some Mayan ruins (see photo page 1) of interest. Although not as spectacular as Chichen Itza, Uxmal or others, they are located along the coast. Of the four sites in the area, two, Yamil Lu’um near the present day Sheraton Hotel and the highest point on the island, and Ruinas Del Rey, near the south end of the island, very likely were look-outs / “aids to navigation” for Mayan “shipping.”

Being this close, a must trip is to go to Isla Mujeres, or “Isle of Women” (there were statues of women found on the island). I took the scenic route by going on a dive boat from Puerto Juarez. The first stop was Garrafon National Park, where snorkelers have a ball and taking pictures of the fish “eye-to-eye” is a snap (no pun intended).

While my fellow passengers were getting wet, I took off on a fast(?) trot down to the south end of the island. There another lantern-less lighthouse is holding forth. This is, or was at the time I was there, functionless, for I could find no source of illumination at all. A care-taker was in a near-by house, but his English was even worse than my Spanish, and I couldn’t tell from his smile if it was to be put back in operation or not.

There is a much earlier aid-to-navigation just a few yards south of the lighthouse. Labeled the ruins of a Mayan Temple, it served as a look-out and warning for Mayan cargo canoes com-
ing from Cozumel or Tulum with trading materials and supplies for other Mayan centers and villages on the peninsula.

Returning to the dive boat, we weighed anchor and proceeded up the bay shore of Isla Mujeres to a loading dock where we debarked for lunch. This concluded, we again sailed north, past the Mexican Navy base, to a dock in “downtown Isla Mujeres.” Incidentally, the Mexican Navy frowns on anyone taking pictures of their ships. I assume it is due to their pride, but that has always puzzled me. For the most part their naval vessels had their beginnings carrying American colors.

Debarking from our boat right in the city itself, I walked north on the Avenida Gustavo Rueda Medina (the main street that runs the entire length of the island) about a mile to one of the prettiest lighthouses anywhere. On the right side of Avenida Rueda Medina, as you walk north, nestled in the backyard of several buildings, and suitably framed with palm trees, is the Isla Mujeres northern lighthouse. This one is complete, built of concrete and looks just “sparking new.” When the concrete tower was poured, it was cast with downward expanding fins for stabilization. The fins and the top of the walk around the lantern are painted a bright red. Discounting the lantern roof, everything else is a coral-white and it makes a striking day-mark.

You might elect to take the route out and around the island as I did, or you might just take the ferry from Puerto Juarez to downtown Isla. The ferry route will take you to all the shops, restaurants and hotels, but you will have to take a cab or rent a bicycle to get down to the southern tip of the island with its lighthouse and Mayan ruins. A lot of tourists in Cancun like to shop on the Isla Mujeres, so you'll have a great time either way.

As more information comes my way, or other Mexican lighthouses find themselves in front of my viewfinder, I'll probably write an addendum to this short report. If any of you contemplate a visit to the area and would like additional information about it, please call me at the number listed on the last page of The Beam.
Great Lakes Lighthouse Festival

by Rich & Elinor Veit

Early in 1998, we made the decision to attend the Great Lakes Lighthouse Festival in Alpena, Michigan held October 9-11. We booked a room at the Holiday Inn for four nights well in advance. Next we planned what we would do on the days before the festival.

On September 30th we left New Jersey with maps, tour guides and a Triptik from AAA, as well as the necessary clothing to span the weather changes we would encounter traveling from southern New Jersey to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. We also packed our photographic equipment and a generous supply of The Beam to share with our fellow lighthouse lovers in Michigan. We were careful to bring along numerous copies of the June, 1998, issue with the article on Michigan’s lighthouses by Katherine House. We wanted people to know that we in New Jersey know and care about their lighthouses. Several people who saw the article later told us that they learned things about Michigan’s lighthouses that they didn’t know before.

Katherine did such a good job on Michigan’s lighthouses in the June issue of The Beam that we will concentrate mostly on the festival in this article. However, our visit to the Upper Peninsula is worth mentioning here. We arrived on the UP (as the people of Michigan call it) in early October, at the peak of their fall foliage season. The Upper Peninsula is made up mostly of state and national forests. It also has about seventy lighthouses, many of them off-shore, and numerous waterfalls. We saw many of both, sometimes only after hiking as much as two miles each way. One such trek took us through the Cheboygan State Park to the ruins of the Old Cheboygan Lighthouse. From the beach by the ruins we could see the Fourteen Foot Shoal Light and the Pequot Light in the distance. All that walking paid off! We also found Lake Superior fascinating. It is so different from the Atlantic Ocean. The surf isn’t nearly as rough as the surf of the ocean. We liked the way the water changes color often. Sometimes it is streaked with shades of turquoise, blues and greens. At other times it appears almost purple.

After nine days on the road and seven hotels we headed south to the Lower Peninsula and the real reason that we had come to Michigan—the Great Lakes Lighthouse Festival. We arrived at our hotel in Alpena on Thursday evening. After settling in and having dinner, we decided to walk around and watch some of the displays being assembled. The first people we encountered were Vicki Lynn Heater of Vicki Lynn’s Gifts and Collectibles of Davison, Michigan and her friend Janet Frank. They were setting up a display of Spencer Collin Lighthouses. We asked them if they had any New Jersey Lighthouses. They had quite a few of them. When we told them that we were involved with Absecon Lighthouse, Janet immediately put that one aside for herself. We gave them copies of The Beam with Katherine House’s Michigan article in it. We stopped back to see them again when Cheryl Spencer Collin was there signing her creations. We purchased one of Cheryl’s lighthouses and had her sign it.

On Friday we met Bill and Ruth Penrose. We had used their book A Traveler’s Guide to Michigan Lighthouses, on both of our trips to Michigan. They were pleased to know how much help their book had been on our travels. We then purchased two more of their books, A Traveler’s Guide to 100 Eastern Lighthouses and A Traveler’s Guide to 116 Western Great Lakes Lighthouses. All three books are good choices if you plan to visit lighthouses on the Great Lakes. We know that we plan to go back.

The first night we were there we met Bill Younger of Harbour Lights. On Saturday we attended his lecture on how he created the Harbour Lights Collectibles. Bill is a very entertaining speaker as well as a talented creator of the flawless lighthouse replicas. During his presentation, he held a drawing of his creations. The best part was that the tickets were handed out free upon entry. We won a Harbour Lights sweatshirt. We later bought one of his lighthouses.

On Saturday night we attended the Keeper’s Dinner. We enjoyed a delicious buffet dinner. A local musician sang folk songs of the Great Lakes and ship wrecks. When introductions were made, we were acknowledged for our involvement with the Absecon Lighthouse and as members of the New Jersey Lighthouse Society.
The speaker for the evening was Tim Harrison of Lighthouse Digest. He gave a slide presentation entitled Lighthouses of Yesterday. It was very emotionally moving to see old photos of so many American lighthouses that no longer exist and to be told what could happen to more of them if no action is taken to preserve them. Tim and Kathleen Finnegan and the staff of Lighthouse Depot also had a booth in the convention center. It looked as though they had brought half of their Maine store with them. By the looks of the business they were doing, it's doubtful that they had much to take back with them.

Quite by chance, we were seated at the same table with Lynn Marvin of Marvin Aerial Photographs and his family at the dinner. Lynn Marvin does some of the most spectacular aerial photos of lighthouses on the Great Lakes. His son was one of the pilots who were giving airplane rides at the local airport. Lynn, his wife, and son all fly airplanes. The next day we visited his sales booth and purchased an aerial photo of White Shoal Lighthouse in the snow on a frozen Lake Michigan. In the December issue of Lighthouse Digest, Tim Harrison wrote a profile of Lynn. We certainly agree with Tim's opinion of Lynn's talent.

On Monday morning we left Alpena and headed toward home loaded down with souvenirs, photographs and a lot of good memories. We discussed where we would stop for the night, but finally opted to drive straight through. We arrived home well after midnight. We know that we will return to the Great Lakes again to see more of the lights we didn't have time for on previous trips.

**My Favorite Lighthouse & A Lighthouse Wedding**

*by Jan Koennecke*

It was a nice surprise to see the article from Katherine House on "The Great Michigan Lighthouse Trip" and seeing the White River Lighthouse picture on the front page of The Beam, June, 1998. I knew I would be seeing the real one soon!

On June 16th, I went 'home' for a two week vacation and through my genealogy interests, was to meet a cousin that I had never known about until searching our family history. How ironic to find a person with my first name (Jeanette -

William A. Robinson III, first lighthouse of White River Light Station, 1875-1911.
mine is spelled Jeannette) and my mother's maiden name (Hall) and to find that she is the granddaughter to one of the lighthouse keepers of "my favorite lighthouse"! Jeanette helped me via phone and mail to compile our family history through nine generations to the first lighthouse keeper of the White River Light Station in Whitehall, Michigan, my great-great uncle William Robinson III. He was keeper for 47 years and had actually helped to build the White River Light Station.

Karen McDonnell and flower girls
Photo by Jan Koennecke

White River Light Station
Photo by Jan Koennecke

We arranged to meet on the Friday of my first week of vacation, but when I called Jeanette, she asked if I would like to attend a wedding on Sunday, June 21st. She said that Karen McDonnell, the lighthouse museum curator, was getting married and we could attend. My sister and I met Jeanette for lunch that Sunday. We got acquainted, ate and exchanged family information and then drove to the lighthouse for the wedding. It was a gorgeous day and when we got there, we found a beautiful setting—a tent for the reception, and wildflowers on the tables, wrapped around the tent poles, and in buckets by the chairs.

There was a Scottish bagpiper and a harpist playing beautiful music and we were watching sailboats going by in the channel in front of the lighthouse. Finally it was time. The piper led Karen's son in as ring-bearer and then we saw Karen with two little flower girls. She was glowing and beautiful in her antique lace dress. I'm sure it was an heirloom.

The wedding was wonderful and relaxed. We learned that Karen had met her new husband after an interview she gave for a video about the lighthouse and he wrote to her to say how much he had enjoyed it.

This was a great surprise to my vacation; to meet a new cousin and to see a wedding at my favorite lighthouse.

Notes from Near & Far

Virginia Lighthouse License Plates

It looks like Virginia will be the next state to feature a lighthouse on it's license plate. The Chesapeake Chapter of the United States Lighthouse Society has spear-
headed the drive for the new plate. It has cleared a legislative committee and sailed unanimously through the Senate on February 1. The next hurdle is a requirement for a minimum of 350 people to sign up for the new plate. If you are a Virginian, you can access the web site of the Chesapeake Chapter at www.cheslights.org/licenseplate to find out how to sign up for the new plate.

It must be noted that New Jersey has not one, but two lighthouse license plates—one with Barnegat Lighthouse (Shore to Please) and one with the Tucker’s Island Lighthouse (Baymen’s Heritage) Plates. Both are available at any NJ Division of Motor Vehicle office.

Brandywine 3rd Order Fresnel Restoration

Thanks to a generous donation from the NJLHS, the original metal framework of the Fresnel lens that will be displayed as part of the Tuckerton Seaport was dry stripped of its many layers of paint, primed and powder coated. The 3rd order lens, formerly at the Brandywine Shoal Lighthouse, will make for an excellent interpretive exhibit.

Lighthouse Lovers Everywhere!

Coming to us via e-mail from Charlie Dimsha of Prescott Valley, Arizona, this picture of Egg Island Lighthouse was taken in the summer of 1946, by Charlie’s mother, Jane Dimsha. Her grandfather and great-grandfather planted and harvested oysters in the area of the Maurice River Cove and the Egg Island Flats and spent hundreds of nights within the beam of this lighthouse. Her father used the lighthouse and the one at East Point to determine the boat’s position over the oyster beds.

Tinicum Rear Range Lighthouse Society News

The Tinicum Rear Range Lighthouse Society at Paulsboro, Inc., held its first annual membership meeting on December 3rd. Frank Turton was appointed Treasurer. The group now has custom matted water-color prints of the lighthouse available for sale. Contact Marc Kamp at (609) 423-1554 if you are interested in purchasing a print.

Shelia’s Collectibles

Shelia’s Collectibles recently retired their Tybee Island Lighthouse (SAV07). Issued in 1990 and priced at $15, a sampling of secondary market dealers found the piece selling at between $38-$60. One dealer had the piece listed for $150. Shelia’s produces more than just lighthouses, but it’s the lighthouses that are of most interest to us. There is even a Shelia’s Barnegat Lighthouse (C0079) available at Byway Shop, Beach Haven Terrace, NJ (609) 492-8965, and a Cape May Lighthouse (C0001) available from Gifts Galore (609) 884-0685. The pieces are custom pieces and only available from the above dealers.

President’s Corner

by Tom Laverty

Nineteen ninety-eight was a hectic one for the Society. So you say, what did we do during the year? Here are some of the highlights:

Lighthouse Visits:

We visited the Finns Point Lighthouse, the East Point Lighthouse, and the Absecon Lighthouse, not only to photograph and climb the towers, but to see restoration projects underway. Unfortunately, we also got to see the charred remains of the recreated Absecon Keeper’s House, which burned to the ground on July 4th.

We visited two historic military forts, one at Fort Mott near Pennsville, NJ and the other at Fort Wadsworth on Staten Island, both sites of membership meetings.

NJLHS Society member Jim Gowdy, an expert on lighthouses of the Delaware Bay and an officer of the Maurice River Historical Society, gave a great presentation at our December meeting. Sara Cureton, director of the Absecon Lighthouse, gave an equally interesting review of the history and restoration work on the tower in Atlantic City at our September meeting. In March, lighthouse author Elinore DeWire marveled us with her stories of the lighthouses she has visited.

Trips:

Two spectacular trips took place. Members went lighthousing in Maine for five days and four nights, organized by trip coordinator Carole DiNapoli. A second trip for two days to Long Island was organized by VP Yvonne Miller with help from Gayle Haines at Lighthouse Safaris. The Long Island trip, which featured five lighthouse stops, will be repeated this spring and is highly recommended, even if you have visited there before.

Volunteerism:

Society volunteers maintained an active tour program at the Sandy Hook Lighthouse. The tower was kept open every weekend from April through November. Forty volunteers
worked to allow 7,400 visitors take tours of this historic lighthouse. Under the direction of Al Smith, volunteers also painted and cleaned the interior of the Keeper’s house. The Keeper’s house was decorated for the holidays and volunteers opened the lighthouse an additional two weekends in December.

Society volunteers also conducted tours at Absecon. They will be continuing their efforts into the 1999 year.

Other volunteers staffed information tables at craft fairs, lighthouse days, and festivals around the state. A few of the locations included:

- The National Lighthouse Museum Celebration on Staten Island
- The Barnegat Bay Decoy Show at Tuckerton
- Fort Hancock Day at Sandy Hook
- The Open House at East Point
- Lighthouse Day at Old Lafayette Village
- The Batsto Craft Fair
- New Jersey Network’s Eye of the Mariner video premier held at Navesink Twin Lights
- East Jersey Old Towne
- Hamilton Township Historical Society program
- The Calverton Maritime Museum (Drum Point Lighthouse) in Solomons, Maryland, where Al & Betty Smith represented the Society

Grants:

While we did not give away millions of dollars, the preservation and memorial funds reached levels that made it possible for the Society to give out grants totaling $8,300. Absecon received $6,000 over a two year period to assist with educational programs and tour guides. Tuckerton Seaport was given $1,300 to get the Brandywine Shoal lens into shape for exhibition. East Point Lighthouse and Finns Point Lighthouses each received $500 to use as needed for on-going programs.

National Lighthouse Museum:

Other Board members and I represented the Society at meetings of the National Lighthouse Steering Committee, whose task it was to select a site for a National Lighthouse Museum. It was an intense selection process that started in October, 1997. The steering committee met three times in 1998, first during March in Newport, Rhode Island, then again in July at Washington D.C., and finally in October, on Staten Island. The former Lighthouse Depot on Staten Island was selected as the museum site. My participation with that organization continues as a board member of the National Lighthouse Center and Museum.

Lest you think that is all we did in 1998:

In December, I appeared on New York PBS Station Channel 13 WNET, to plug lighthouses in New Jersey and promote the National Lighthouse Center and Museum. The appearance was part of WNET’s pledge drive during a second showing of the series Legendary Lighthouses.

The Society had its most successful Photography Contest to date at our membership meeting last March. We had more photographs entered than ever before. The New York Harbor Lights organization, Staten Island’s version of the NJLHS, joined us for the day. Their members also entered photographs, which gave the contest a regional appeal.

Membership has continued to grow and reached nearly 1,000 people in 1998.

Kim Ruth still manages to publish four great issues of The Beam and maintain the Society’s Internet Web page (njlhs.burlco.org) which has attracted a lot of attention.

The NJ State Division of Travel and Tourism has linked to our Web Page on the Internet. The Society’s e-mail address (njlshs@burlco.org) is also located there so people looking at the State’s Web site (njlhs.burlco.org) can contact us if they want additional information on New Jersey lighthouses.

We tried to organize a dinner dance for last April, but, hey, you have to have at least one disappointment a year.

1999 promises to be just as exciting a year and I invite you to get involved with the Society. We have become far more than just meetings.

From the Archives

From The New York Herald, Monday, April 15, 1912, page 1 column 6:

Channel Light is Ready

.Range Lamp at Hampton Court to Be Used First Time to-night

The new Ambrose Channel light, which has just been completed at Hampton Court, Staten Island, will be lighted for the first time to-night. It is a white light of the fixed order and is of a power sufficient to make it visible on clear nights for thirty-one miles.

It is intended solely as a range light for vessels entering Ambrose Channel. It will shine at the top of a brick tower on an elevation three hundred feet above the sea.

----end of quote----

The “Channel Light” referred to in the article is better known today as the Staten Island Rear Range Light—what’s interesting about this report is that it is reported in the same date and edition as the sinking of the Titanic.
Society News

Sandy Hook Lighthouse Christmas

We had several members up at Sandy Hook Lighthouse to help bring the Christmas spirit to the lighthouse. Rich Veit, Al Smith, and Mike Smith decorated the lighthouse with a 6' wreath. Elinor Veit, Janet Cerame, Pat Brooks, Kate Smith and Betty Jean Smith helped decorate the keeper’s house. There were many visitors who enjoyed the lighthouse tours and treats at the keeper’s house during the two weekends the lighthouse was open before Christmas.

Irish Lighthouse Trip

Member Janet Cerame is organizing a trip to Ireland’s lighthouses in June. This is not a Society trip, but if interested you can contact Janet at 732-774-1959, fax 732-7741976, or e-mail at res@tricolor-intl.com for prices and details.

HELP WANTED

by Al Smith

Help, I need somebody, not just anybody...Help me if you can, I beg of you.... Won’t you please, please, help me.....

Although the Beatles wrote those lyrics as a love song, they may have been asking the question every organization is asking these days. With budgets being slashed in the public sector and donations not meeting operating expenses in the private sector, use of volunteers is mandatory if an organization is to survive.

The goals of The New Jersey Lighthouse Society are: to assist in the restoration and preservation of America’s lighthouses, to continue research into their history and to collect and preserve artifacts and lore. One way of doing that is through the socialization that takes place at our meetings and through the various trips we take. We are now being asked to show how serious we are about the pursuit of those goals by various organizations that have asked us to provide volunteers for various projects.

Absecon Lighthouse has a need for volunteers to augment their staff and act as tour guides, site interpreters, etc. They expect to be open 5 days a week, probably Thursday through Monday.

The National Park Service, which has no staff of its own available for the lighthouse at Sandy Hook and cannot recruit sufficient volunteers for its other sites, has asked the NJLHS to provide the necessary staff to open the lighthouse on weekends from April through November. We need, at minimum, 2 tour guides and one greeter or sign-up/sales person per tour day.

The Tuckerton Seaport and Baymen’s Museum is in the process of building a replica of the Tuckerton Lighthouse and we have been informed that they will be asking for volunteer assistance from our organization.

The Maurice River Historical Society, representing East Point Lighthouse, which has a very small organization, will surely be looking for volunteers to assist them with tours, etc., in the future. They are presently pursuing funds to finish the exterior restoration and to start the interior. In addition, there may be opportunities for “hands on” work in 1999.

Where am I going with this? Well, as the Beatles so aptly put it, “Help me if you can I beg of youuuuu.”

Yes, we need your help! Meeting new folks and socializing with “old” friends are great parts of our activities, but to accomplish our “mission” we need volunteers to support the projects mentioned above and others that may come about from time to

Looking for information on lighthouse artist

Member Joan Doncoes was given a sketch of a lighthouse some months ago. The artist’s name was “K A T I”. The frame and backing were old but there was a sticker on the back signed and dated by the artist. Joan took the sketch to be re-framed and needless to say the sticker was lost. She has tried various sources to trace the artist to no avail and hoped that someone in the society might have knowledge of the artist or how one might go about finding information about the artist. A search on the “net” of “Kati” with “Lighthouse” and “Painting” gave me 32,570 hits many of whom were artists, but few of the pages had pictures of their works, so it’s a real long-shot. If you can help Joan you can e-mail her at lgthousejd@aol.com.
time. This is one of the ways we can “restore and preserve” the lighthouses of New Jersey.

Whether you can give one day, one weekend or more a month, whatever you can do is needed and appreciated. Sandy Hook alone requires a minimum of 24 volunteer days a month (3 people per day x 2 days per weekend x 4 weekends a month) to be open each weekend.

We can do this! All organizations offer either a training program or directions and information to help you with the various tasks. All you have to bring is a smile and a willingness to meet people and talk lighthouses, just like you do at the meetings! If you like to get your hands dirty, there is always painting, cleaning, minor repairs, etc., to be done everywhere.

In addition, really talented people who can write newsletters, grant applications, make up brochures and exhibits are always in demand.

How can you help?

Why not call Tom Laverty or Al Smith and we will be glad to “sign you up,” or direct you to someone in another organization who will be glad to have your help.

PHOTO CONTEST
by Al Smith

This year we will try something a little different. Thanks to the Kodak Co., Mr. Edd Mathisen, a Kodak Ambassador, will join us for our photo contest. Mr. Mathisen has a Masters degree in Photography and is a professional photographer, now retired. I won’t list all his qualifications, as I don’t want to scare everyone off! He will share with us his wealth of photographic knowledge to help us take better pictures. He will also talk to us about the winning pictures and explain to us what he feels made them winners. He has assured us that all of his comments will be positive—he feels everyone learns more that way. He will also be bringing a short program that folks can watch during the break or while they are voting.

I am excited about his visit. Much of what I know about taking photographs I learned from the Kodak Ambassadors while visiting our National Parks. I’m sure his hints can help us all.

Just a few reminders—Anyone who wants to mail their photos can mail them to:

Al & Betty Smith
7 Goldfinch Rd.
Audubon Park, NJ 08106

Remember; NO photos will be returned by mail unless return postage has been provided.

Two photos only for the Master’s category (that includes those of you who wish to submit ‘enhanced’ photos for the Master’s).

Three photos TOTAL for those in the other 2 categories (including those not in the Master’s but who wish to submit ‘enhanced’ photos)

NO names ANYWHERE on your photo. You must submit an entry blank for EACH photo, NOT 1 for all photos.

Decision of the committee regarding ‘enhanced photos’ is final.

NJLHS Presents —
Lighthouses of Cape Cod & Martha’s Vineyard
by Carole DiNapoli

The NJLHS fall activity will be a trip to the lighthouses of Cape Cod and Martha’s Vineyard, October 4-8, 1999. The cost is $525.00 per person double occupancy.

Itinerary highlights:

- Nauset Light, the Three Sisters, Highland Light, Chatham Light, Plymouth Light, Derby Wharf Light.
- Tour Cape Cod Potato Chip factory.
- Visit Provincetown and Chatham.
- Whale Watch Cruise—view Long Point Lighthouse and Race Point Light.
- Ferry trip to Martha’s Vineyard with island tour to see lights.
- Tour along Boston’s North Shore.
- Visit Lifesaving Museum at Hull.
- 4 Nights Lodging.
- 4 Breakfasts, 4 Dinners.

More information and reservation forms will be mailed with the June Beam. Questions or comments can be directed to Carole DiNapoli, (732) 297-4280.
Lighthouse People...

by Ernest Corty

What makes "Lighthouse People" very special and unique? And what makes someone a "Lighthouse Person"? Believe it or not, I was thinking about these questions just the other day. I think I was driven to this preponderance by the fact that about twenty-five people asked me if I knew about the "Legendary Lighthouses" program recently on public television (Fall 98). I knew about it—why just the fact that I was asked the question was somewhat insulting! I was able to view the six part series even though I missed some of a few of the shows. My family even agreed to watch most of them with me!

No, when I think about "Lighthouse People," I don't think about those who watch a television special on lighthouses. Perhaps when I think of "Lighthouse People," I'm recalling those with special names, titles or those who own a lighthouse. You know the ones that I mean: "Mr. Lighthouse," "The Lighthouse People," "The Lighthouse Lady," "Lighthouse Mom," "Official Lighthouse Photographer," and those who have bought or have built lighthouses. Some have even secured Coast Guard approval to light them as an aid to navigation.

No, when I think about "Lighthouse People," I don't think about those who are fortunate to earn a living writing books about lighthouses or painting pictures of them. Furthermore, I don't think about those who live in lighthouses. In fact, I'm sure I don't think about those who built their own aid to navigation. Now don't get me wrong, these are multi-talented people and they have enhanced the nostalgic lore of lighthouses greatly.

Perhaps, putting into words what I think is a bit more challenging than I thought at first. Anyhow, I'm prepared to give it a try, so here goes. "Lighthouse People" are that special breed that try to identify every picture of a lighthouse they see. It doesn't matter if it is pictured on a billboard or viewed as part of a commercial on television. It doesn't matter if it is part of an advertisement, on a placemat, or in a magazine. "Lighthouse People" often stop along the road side to take pictures of signs, billboards, or handmade decorations in someone's backyard that feature a lighthouse. "Lighthouse People" spend hours working on scrapbooks full of postcards, pictures, articles and other items of interest pertaining to lighthouses. You can tell a "Lighthouse Person" when friends come to visit and your spouse warns you prior to their arrival not to bore them with hours of pictures and conversation about lighthouses. You can also tell this type of person when you are finally allowed to get your scrapbooks, pictures, videos, and whatever out; and you're the only one still listening to yourself after forty-five minutes. (Imagine someone losing interest after forty-five minutes!) "Lighthouse People" bake cakes in the shape of a favorite lighthouse.

They collect lighthouse pins. They wear t-shirts and sweatshirts with lighthouses sewed, painted, sketched, or embroidered on them. Some even force their children to wear them. "Lighthouse People" plan their vacations around lighthouses and then fit other items of importance into their plans. After all, what is more important: historical items, amusement parks, swimming, or mountain climbing? I think lighthouses! "Lighthouse People" have been known to travel incredible miles to view a single lighthouse. They plan photo contests and picnics with other "Lighthouse People."

One of their more endearing quirks is that they have vehicle license plates with a lighthouse picture on them or the name "lighthouse" on the plate. This leads to many interesting spellings of lighthouse since most plates only allow for 8 characters. "Lighthouse People" make lighthouse beans, lighthouse cookies, lighthouse stew, and a few have been known to use lighthouse toilet paper. (I haven't stooped that low yet!)

In conclusion, you can be sure you're one of the "Lighthouse People" if you find yourself doing any of the above mentioned things. Strange, but somehow I find myself doing almost all of them! It seems that once you light that first lamp, it's hard to turn it out. Oh yes, I almost forgot, "Lighthouse People" talk a peculiar language. They make-up lighthouse sayings and use them frequently. You can find them in their e-mail addresses, passwords, nicknames, and they often find their way into normal everyday conversation. In fact, the more I think about it, I begin to wonder if there isn't something wrong with people like us. Oh well, "Keep the Light Lit" and "Burn it Bright Till We Meet Again" and "The Flashlight, aka The Beam." Really, I must glow, I mean go! See what I mean?

In His Light,
Ernie

Program Signals

by Yvonne Miller

The March 20, 1999 meeting will be held at Cook College Campus of Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey, at the School of Agriculture's Holly House, 2nd floor. This a jammed-packed meeting and we will do our best to follow the time schedule:

10:30 a.m. – Hospitality.
11:00 a.m. – General Membership meeting.
12:00 a.m. – Lunch Break (bring your lunch) and voting on Photo Contest entries.
12:30 p.m. – Guest Speaker Doug Bingham (Co-founder of the New England Lighthouse Foundation) slide presentation on Lightsips of the North Atlantic and Cape Cod, Doug will include some slides of the Race Point Lighthouse restoration and will display his collection of postcards and memorabilia of lighthouses.
Following Doug’s presentation, the Photo Contest winners will be announced. Edd Mathiesen, a Kodak Ambassador, will give us pointers on “taking good pictures” and as always, Ways and Means will be selling lighthouse items and books. You’re right—there is no lighthouse at Rutgers! There is so much planned for this meeting I had hoped no one would notice!

Directions:

From the Parkway South: Exit to U.S. Route 1. Pass the Sears store on the right. Take the second turnoff (East Brunswick), just beyond the overpass. Turn right on Ryders Lane. Go to the end of the road divider and turn left on Log Cabin Road to Holy House.

From the Parkway North: Exit to the NJ Turnpike, South (Trenton). Take Exit 9 from the Turnpike (New Brunswick) to Route 18, then U.S. Route 1 South. Continue as described above.

From the Turnpike: Take Exit 9 (New Brunswick) to Route 18, then U.S. Route 1 South, then follow directions above.

Summer Meeting:

June 26, 1999, at the Tuckerton Seaport, Barnegat Baymen’s Museum, on Route 9 in Tuckerton, New Jersey. More details will be posted to the website (njlhs.burlco.org) as they become available and will appear in the June issue of The Beam. The meeting will be held in the nearby VFW hall.

Fall Meeting:

Marcus Hook Lighthouse in Bellefont, Delaware. More details will be posted to the website (njlhs.burlco.org) as they become available and will appear in the September issue of The Beam. The meeting will be held in the nearby VFW hall.

Winter Meeting:

In Sea Girt, we hope. More details will be posted to the website (njlhs.burlco.org) as they become available and will appear in the December issue of The Beam.

December Meeting Recap

As so many of our meetings have been lately, the Heislerville Community Hall was full in spite of the long ride (for most of us) and the rain. Jim Gowdy gave a great presentation on East Point and some Delaware River Range Lights. The Ways and Means committee members were very busy supplying members and guests with Christmas gifts, as were members of the Maurice River Historical Society. Diane Ewan, Vice President of the MRHS was presented with a check from our preservation funds for continued restoration of the East Point Lighthouse. Following the meeting, members moved on to tour the new renovation work at the lighthouse. Fortunately, by that time, the sun decided to shine and the photo opportunities were awesome.

Long Island Bus Trip II

There are still a few seats available on the Long Island Bus Trip. The trip is April 24th and 25th. We must have your response and check (paid in full) by March 24th. The cost of the trip is $235 per person single, $390 per couple, and $185 per person triple occupancy.

The Beam - Drive to Long Island to the secure parking area for your vehicles and board the bus early Saturday, April 24, 1999. Depending upon time and final arrangements, leave for Fire Island for a tour of the light (climb) and catered lunch at the lighthouse. We will have time for visiting the gift shop, then leave for Montauk. The trip to Montauk is approximately 2-3 hours. A video presentation and talk will be given on the bus. Upon arrival, we will tour the museum, climb the light and visit the gift shop. We will leave Montauk for Sag Harbor for our hotel and dinner reservations. Sunday morning we leave Sag Harbor for Horton’s Point, Eaton’s Neck and Huntington Harbor Light. A continental breakfast and luncheon are included.

Please mail checks, payable to NJLHS no later than March 24, 1999 to:

Yvonne Miller
42 Sunset Trail
Medford, NJ 08055

The Beam, the official journal of the New Jersey Lighthouse Society, Inc., is published quarterly, March, June, September, and December. Membership dues are $15.00 single, and $20.00 family, and are for the calendar year. Back issues are available free for members joining mid-year. All materials are copyrighted and cannot be borrowed or reproduced without permission of the New Jersey Lighthouse Society. The NJLHS - New Jersey Lighthouse Society, Inc., is a non-profit educational corporation (501c3).

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