



# The Lighthouse Log

Summer 2012

## *The quarterly Newsletter of the BLMA*

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### **Published by**

East Side Printers

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## Message From The President

Visitors to the museum will see the results of all the work that was accomplished this spring under the direction of BLMA Board member Stewart Morgan. The museum was completely emptied of all contents in order to undertake the renovations. Stewart spent many hours on this project that included repairs to the walls, repainting of all walls and

refinishing the floor. This was the most complete renewing of the museum interior since 1993. The grounds adjacent to the buildings also were beautified. Come down and see all that has been accomplished.

In line with efforts to make the tower more accessible for viewing, ten "Open Tower" dates have been scheduled.



*A beautiful day for the 2012 inaugural tower climb. Remaining dates for climbing the tower: July 28, August 11 and 25, September 15 and 22 and October 6. In case of rain, next day.*

These dates are posted in the museum, listed at the website, [www.beavertailight.org](http://www.beavertailight.org), and published in the Jamestown Summer Guide published by the Jamestown Press. The view from the catwalk is breathtaking. On a clear day Martha's Vineyard is visible.

If you overlooked membership renewal at the end of 2011 or are reading this as a courtesy copy, please consider using the enclosed form. Membership dues, gift shop proceeds and donations pay for the operating expenses of the organization and museum.

*I encourage you to take a drive down to visit the museum and enjoy our National Treasure.*

**See you at the light!**

— George ■

## BLMA Grant Status

Grant funding from philanthropic and preservation organizations provide BLMA resources to undertake needed restoration and preservation projects. Each year we apply to grantor organizations by responding to opportunities which fit our mission and objectives. Almost all of the grant programs are competitive and in many cases require matching funds. The matching funds come from our generous benefactors and donors, receipts from our gift shop and membership dues. In recent years BLMA has written successful proposals enabling much of the buildings preservation work to be accomplished. However, due to economic conditions we are seeing less opportunities and increased competition.

This year we have applied for financial help for three projects, tailored to meet grantor guidelines to three different organizations.

1. Restoration of the exterior of the Fog Signal Building including replacing 11 broken windows, repairing the building walls and replicating the two original fog signal horn trumpets.
2. Rebuilding and preserving the original 1749 foundation by replacing the missing stones in the cavities of the foundation, providing a new foundation base on the SW side and pouring a new reinforced concrete protective cap.
3. In consonance with our Master Plan, undertake renovations in both keeper buildings to expand the museum into both buildings and begin to procure new interactive visitor displays for use in the expanded spaces. This grant application also includes work inside the granite light tower. ■

## Wrap Up of the Champlin Foundations Funded Activities

An earlier issue of the Log described the first major activity, the restoration of 32 windows and replacement of associated hardware in the Keeper and Assistant Keeper Houses. This work was done by Lomontagne Woodworkers. This group also completed repairs to the garage, replacing soffits and some sills as well as painting the structure

The second major activity completed was an electrical upgrade to 200 amp service for both houses. A rewiring of both houses was undertaken, replacing an outdated system with the latest approved



hardware, including new wall outlets and the electrical capacity and flexibility to meet the needs of the expanded museum as outlined in the Master Plan.

Electrical wiring to the aquarium was placed underground and a number outdated wires, mostly phone, were removed from the buildings.

The security system was enhanced with outdoor sensors and flood lights. The fire alarm system for both houses was improved with the addition of interior auditory alerts, emergency lights, pull levers and lighted exit signs. ■

## 2012 Scholarship Winners

Each year the Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association accepts applications for W. Craig Armington Scholarships. These \$1,000 scholarships are given to Jamestown residents who have been accepted to a college or university and will begin their studies in the fall. The applicants are judged on scholarship, extra curricular activities and involvement in their community.

The first recipient of the scholarship this year is Vincenzo Moretti, who graduated from the Prout School. While at Prout Vincenzo won numerous awards in the fields of science and engineering. Being a well rounded student, he has participated and been co-captain of the Robotics Team and on the school tech crew. He also has participated in productions of 'Grease', 'the Boy Next Door', 'Little Women', and 'Our Town'. Vincenzo also sailed for four years for Prout's 420 sailing team. These accomplishments earned him membership in the National Honor Society. His after school activities included volunteering at Beavertail Lighthouse, running a small lawn mowing business and, last but not least, earning the rank of Eagle Scout. Vincenzo will be attending Fairfield University in the fall to pursue a degree in Electrical Engineering.

Marshall Vigneault also was awarded a scholarship. Marshall is another extremely well rounded



*President George Warner presents checks to scholarship winners, Marshall Vigneault and Vincenzo Moretti*

student who attended the Prout School. He earned himself a 4.20 grade point average in a rigorous AP, IB, and honors course schedule. He received the prestigious Pell Medal for his hard work and has been selected for membership in the National Honor Society for both his junior and senior years. Outside of the classroom he was vice president of his class, member of the Recycling Club, and a Student Ambassador. Not only was he on the Varsity Baseball team for all four years, he was voted Division II Baseball All-Star for 3 years. Outside of school, Marshall has operated a small landscaping business serving some yards here on the island. With all of this he has found time to volunteer at the Jamestown Community Garden, coach at baseball clinics, and work with the

Jamestown Rotary Club. In September he will attend URI, studying Engineering and Physics.

Both of these young men are a credit to their families, school, and community. BLMA is honored to award both Vincenzo and Marshall scholarships. We look forward hearing of their accomplishments in the coming years. ■



## The Ferry South Kingstown

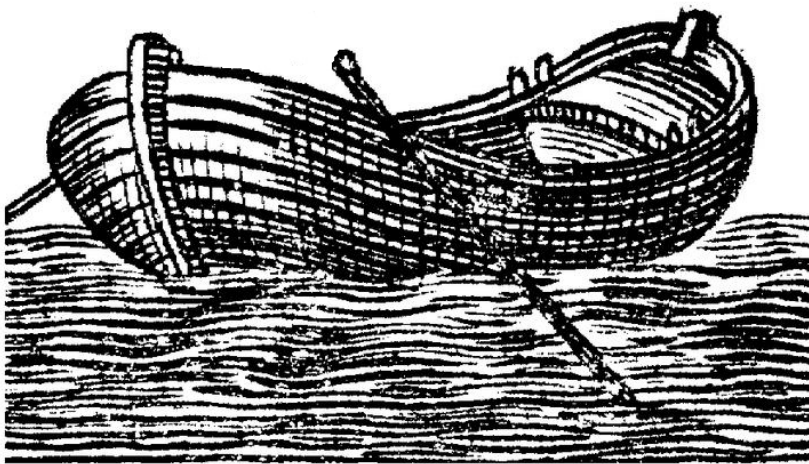
Those who lived on an island in Narragansett Bay during the 19<sup>th</sup> century were well aware of the need for a dependable ferry service. Rhode Islanders living on Conanicut Island were no exception to this. In the days before bridges provided easy access from either side of the bay, vessels transported people and their goods safely from the island to the mainland. The earliest ferries to the island were, of course, sailing vessels and it wasn't until 1888 that a steam powered vessel was used for this purpose. Sailing ferries were singularly subject to problems that did not affect the larger power-driven vessels. Since they were usually small, their loading was much more crucial. When not properly balanced they would be much more threatened by heavy wind and wave action. But the comparison of wind and steam powered ferries is not the subject of this story.

This is a story about fate and what can happen when everything goes right. Good luck is often more important than skill or training and many examples bear this out but none more than the story of the rescue of those aboard the ferry running from the west side of Conanicut Island to the mainland in September of 1869. The incident took place just three weeks after one of the worst storms in the history of the state, one in which three dozen vessels met with disaster. The twenty-five ton sailing ferry SOUTH KINGSTON was running on her normal route and had departed from the western ferry landing just moments before being struck by a heavy squall off Dutch Island. The Newport Journal reported the details of the event as follows: *ANOTHER RESCUE – We are again called upon to chronicle an accident upon the waters of our bay, that but for the promptitude and gallantry of two men on shore, would have undoubtedly proven*

*fatal. On Tuesday last, as the sail ferry boat of some 25 tons measurement, running between the west side of Conanicut Island and Narragansett was on her way over, when near Dutch Island a heavy squall suddenly struck her, throwing her on her beam ends. Before the men in charge could right her she began to fill and quickly sank to the bottom. Fortunately a few feet of her topmast remained above water and to this the skipper and the only passenger, a Miss Arnold, of Conanicut, clung for their lives.*

*The accident was seen from Dutch Island by two men at work there, Mr. Job Hazard and Mr. Chester Allen. They at once ran to the wharf, and jumping into the only boat there, a small row-boat, in the midst of a heavy sea pulled out and bravely rescued these two persons from their perilous position. Such gallantry deserves special recognition. By a singular combination of circumstances, this little yawl was the only boat at Dutch Island, and was there by accident. All of the government boats were more or less disabled during the late gale, and this boat had been found adrift the same morning by the very ferry boat whose people it*

*was the means of saving, and had been left at the wharf at Dutch Island a few hours before. An accident of this character, it is said, has never occurred before on this ferry. The sunken boat has since been raised. We can only surmise how the hand of fate led the*



master of the ferry to pick up the drifting boat... and imagine the coincidence that the boat had been drifting about for weeks without some other vessel having found it and bringing it in. Add to this, the ferry master's decision to leave the lost boat at Dutch Island only hours before the accidental sinking of the ferry itself. The odds of one or two of these actions taking place let alone all of them together are staggering. ■

## Gift Shop's New Look

The sleek black boxes and screen to be found in the museum gift shop are the heart of the new Point of Sale system that is being installed this summer. It is tangible evidence of planned gift shop expansion and the need for a more sophisticated approach to management of merchandise. Inventory control is much easier with the POS. An accurate record of sales will be as simple as passing the wand over the barcode. Everything will be calculated and the docent on duty will simply make the necessary change indicated on the screen.

The key to the system is the bar codes that you are familiar with. Each item needs a bar code. This summer, Melissa Burrows and Dorrie Linn are working to set up bar codes for the majority of items that are carried in the gift shop lacking codes. These bar codes will be placed on the individual items. Pre-coded merchandise is easy to get into the system and on the shelves. The work will continue into the fall. Training for docents will be conducted during the off season. Ultimately, this improvement will pay great dividends for all phases of the gift shop operation, especially docent peace of mind. The equipment is very easy to use and will save having to use the calculator for multiple items.

There will be volunteer opportunities for the coding of individual items. Let Dorrie know of your interest. ■



*Before and after photos of museum repair. Stewart Morgan supervised the substantial repair and renewal of the museum interior.*

## Spring Tours

It was a busy spring for tour guides Linda Warner, George Warner and Varoujan Karentz with ten groups visiting the museum. The season started in April with a visit by the R.I. Model A Club. Their beautifully restored cars were lined up on the grass behind the light station.

Five school groups visited the museum as an educational activity to culminate the

school year. Averaging fifty students each, some classes built models of area lighthouses. A slide show of the children's work will be on display in the museum.

Three senior groups visited in June and two more will come later in the year. During the summer, camp groups will often come to the Beavertail Park for the day, visiting the museum and aquarium. ■



*The Model A Club had a beautiful day to display their cars and enjoy the museum*



*Melissa and Ed Burrows did a wonderful job refinishing the pedestal for the fresnel lens.*

## Docent Day

On May 5th the BLMA board gave a spring brunch for BLMA docents and volunteers. The morning started with a meeting, led by Linda Warner. She welcomed and thanked all returning docents for their hard work and had a special greeting for the new docents. She also handed out the information packets that she assembled. In previous years the information was available at the museum, but requests were made for the history to be given out so the volunteers could become familiar with the material at their leisure.

After the meeting all of the volunteers moved to the Keeper's House where they enjoyed a buffet brunch provided by the Jamestown Tavern. More than 60 people took part in a leisurely brunch, during which they enjoyed socializing with summer friends. A number of door prizes were awarded. ■

**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. Thank you in advance for sharing this membership application!**



WE OFFER THE FOLLOWING MEMBERSHIPS:

**ANNUAL DUES**

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

Please contact me about helping with BLMA projects and services.

Please make your checks payable to: BLMA

P.O. Box 83, Jamestown, RI 02835

BLMA is a 501 (c) (3) non profit organization



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and engaging in fund raising  
activities necessary for enhancing  
visitor experiences.*

Visit us on the web at  
[www.beavertaillight.org](http://www.beavertaillight.org)



**Mark your calendars and save the date!**  
**Annual meeting - September 18<sup>th</sup>**  
Jamestown Library, Community room, 7 pm

