



The Lighthouse Log

Winter 2011

The quarterly Newsletter of the BLMA

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BLMA RECEIVES GRANT FROM CHAMPLIN FOUNDATIONS

The diminishing availability of grants and the increasing need for funding by non profits for maintenance, restoration, education, expansion, program improvements, etc., make it extremely competitive to obtain resources to meet program goals. BLMA is very fortunate to have Mr. Varoujan Karentz as a member of its board of directors. Varoujan is dedicated, knowledgeable, resourceful, persuasive, enterprising and dynamic in pursuit of the organization's objectives. He is primarily responsible for the unusual success in acquiring grant funding for the improvement of the light station.

His convincing justification of the need for funding for lighthouse maintenance and improvements persuaded The Champlin Foundations to grant BLMA more than \$99,000. The grant will be applied towards two separate projects: 1. Window repairs. The lighthouse has 31 double sash windows, all of which need extensive maintenance and repairs. Cracking paint must be stripped, the wood smoothed, sanded, primed and painted. The same must be done with moldings, sills, sashes, rails, stiles, etc.

Weight boxes, ropes, pulleys will be replaced or restored and broken latches will be replaced. All work will be performed in accordance with R.I. State historic preservation requirements.

2. Electrical service upgrades to three BLMA buildings. Smoke and carbon detectors will be installed as well as emergency lighting and telephone jacks. All exposed wiring, conduits, and old junction boxes will be removed.



Convenience outlets will be upgraded to 20 amps with 12 gauge wiring. Motion activated switches will be installed as well as a new Firelite type fire alarm system. Existing panels and circuit breakers will be replaced with four separate 10 amp panel and circuit breakers. New lighting will replace old track lighting. A separate 60 amp feed wire will serve the old fog signal building which now serves as the aquarium. Because of the historic nature of the buildings all work to be done will be consistent with preserving their historic features.

We are all excited about these new initiatives. It is planned to complete the projects before the end of summer.

A Message From The President

Before I affiliated with Beavertail Lighthouse as a member, then later as a director, I always viewed the light station as an idyllic place, a short walk from my home. It's a place I visit often to enjoy its serenity and stunning beauty. Like the old sailor who traveled the World, only to discover that eden lay in his own back yard-that's how I view Beavertail. Now, as president of the organization, I'm learning that it takes great effort and many people to maintain that backyard treasure. For example, it never occurred to me that the R.I. Department of Environmental Management (DEM) is pivotal in the maintenance of Beavertail Point. DEM has a cadre of employees who ensure the grounds are properly maintained and safe for visitors. Meanwhile, BLMA has the responsibility to maintain the structures in conformance with the guidelines for the preservation of historic buildings. BLMA also develops educational programs, provide tours of the tower and museum,

man the gift shop, and perform numerous other functions (including, at times, sweeping floors and washing windows). While it's all a labor of love, it demands effort and dedication, but it pays handsomely in psychic income. To the casual visitor it may be compared to the duck found placidly floating in the pond while its web feet paddle furiously. Luckily, my term as president is supported by many "ducks" who furiously paddle to keep the momentum of the lighthouse moving forward as a museum, educational resource, and visitor attraction.

There is a timeless Navy signal flag code, hoisted only upon the completion of a difficult, particularly superbly executed action. The code is composed simply of two flags, the letters "B" and "Z", spoken as "Bravo Zulu". When decoded it translates as "Well done", It's a concise compliment, always deeply appreciated by the recipients. All our BLMA volunteers deserve a rousing "BRAVO ZULU"! ■

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS...WHERE ARE THEY?

For several years Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association has awarded college scholarships to deserving high school students residing in Jamestown. Applicants are selected based on need, merit, and achievements through a competitive process. Named in memory and in honor of its original benefactor, the Craig Armington Scholarship Fund has awarded two scholarships annually for more than the past ten years.

Although the scholarship committee does not closely track the progress of students who have earned the distinction, it occasionally learns of the success they have achieved. We were recently informed that one of the winners in 2000, Ms. Elspeth Beauchamp, received a PhD in Tumor Biology from Georgetown University in 2010. She is currently doing research at Georgetown, but is a candidate for a post doctoral position at Philadelphia Children's Hospital. It is most gratifying to hear of such achievements and that BLMA has played a role, however small, in that success.

BLMA continues to award annual scholarships, but that funding is being depleted. If you are interested in

supporting this most worthwhile program that contributes to the future of Jamestown's outstanding students who need assistance to continue their education, please donate to the BLMA Craig Armington Scholarship Fund.

Congratulations and best wishes to Elspeth Beauchamp! We will be delighted to inform our readers the progress of other scholarship recipients when we learn of them. ■



MEN (AND WOMEN) WANTED

How can I help?" That question is music to any volunteer coordinator's ears. As an organization with no paid staff, BLMA survives through the labors of a small but dedicated cadre of volunteers. They devote their energies to improving the organization as an educational asset, historic site, and cultural visitor attraction. Their activities are varied. Some do maintenance and repairs and improvements while others act as docents, guiding visitors through the museum and enriching the visitor experience. Others perform archival work and do research about the light station history to fill in the 18th and 19th centuries knowledge gaps. And still



others plant flowers and maintain the vegetation immediately surrounding the buildings. Some with administrative skills maintain membership records and initiate correspondence. In short, opportunities to help abound.

There are distinct advantages to volunteering with BLMA: You get to spend a few hours at one of the most beautiful scenic areas in new England, and you can work days and hours according to your availability and interests. Some volunteers work almost daily while others are able to expend only two or three hours weekly. The added benefit is that the psychic income is incomparable. Try it!



As spring approaches, members plan to do extensive interior and exterior improvements. Museum walls and ceilings need a fresh coat of paint; the garage will be power washed followed by a new coat of paint on the exterior walls and wood trim. If last summer's experience in restoring the oil shed is any indication, preserving the garage will be a fun project.....Want in? Call. We'll make a place for you.

Like the Marines....we want a few good men... and women to volunteer in this worthwhile cause.

Put your spare time to good use: Volunteer at Beavertail. Please email GAARCH@COX.NET or EPIC@JUNO.COM Your mail will be answered. ■

BECOME A BEAVERTAIL HISTORY DETECTIVE

Through the years BLMA, some of its members and history buffs have been collecting items of historical interest that relate to our light station. Each year our files continue to grow as new historical information is uncovered. However, there still remains gigantic information voids over the more than 260 years Beavertail Light has existed. The best example is the old 1749 and 1753 light: Other than a couple single line sketches, no other images exist. Imagine: a 107 year (1749-1856) period where neither plans, paintings, nor photographs have been seen. It's not only the light tower. Other than names, we know little about the lighthouse keepers, how they

lived, how they were selected and reasons why they left. Our photographic and image file of the 45 or so Beavertail keepers and Assistant Keepers is woefully less than a handful. We also lack knowledge of the many events that took place at the site over the years. Our scraps of information have not been catalogued as of yet.

Equally absent are details of the technology evolution which took place in lenses, lamps, clock mechanisms and fuels. Fog signal experiments we know of are fragmentary and some information we have is contradictory. Government record sources, logbooks, personnel files, engineering reports, etc are

available, but we need researchers to spend time at these sources, contact keeper family members and glean forgotten and hidden documents. Join two of our members, Lanette Macaruso (lanette.spranzo@gmail.com) and Varoujan Karentz (epic@juno.com) who continue to add knowledge to Beavertail's history by contacting them and exchange ideas about searching, finding and documenting new data and information. ■

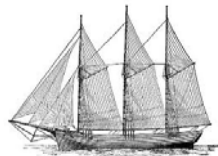


What Are The Odds?

The process for determining the most favorable location for life saving stations was by no means a matter of chance. A great deal of thought went into their placement which was based on the number and location of maritime disasters which had taken place in the past. The station at Narragansett Pier, the first in the state of Rhode Island, was located so that vessels in distress from Point Judith to Newport could be reached in about the same length of time. As more disasters occurred and more stations were built, it was inevitable that a station would be located at the tip of Point Judith despite those two stations being just over six miles apart. But the occurrence of the stranding at nearly the exact midpoint between two stations is only one element in this tragedy. The other was the coincidence of two major stranding on the same night and at almost the same time.

The Annual Report of the Life Saving Service for the fiscal year 1891 tells the story in great detail, "On December 26, 1890, the three-masted schooner **A.H.**

HURLBURT, of Gloucester, Massachusetts, was totally wrecked on Black Point, near Narragansett Pier, Rhode Island, and three of the six men



composing her crew, including the captain, were drowned in plain sight and almost within reach of a few people residing in the immediate vicinity of Black Point, who had hastened to the rocky shore and rendered all the assistance that was possible in saving three of the crew. The sad affair was all over before it was possible for assistance to arrive from the station at Narragansett Pier. This station is about two and three quarters miles northward from the scene of the wreck. The next nearest station is three miles away, at Point Judith. So destructive was the force of the sea that in less than twenty minutes from the moment the schooner struck the rocks she had gone completely to pieces. At the time this happened, the crew of the Narragansett Pier Station was busily engaged, with the assistance of residents of the locality, in rescuing the crew of the schooner **BILL STOWE**, wrecked three-quarters of a mile north of the station. The two wrecks were about three and a half miles apart. The weather on

December 26 was bad. A thick and driving snowstorm raged all day from the early morning; it was bitter cold, the wind blew a furious gale, and there was an ugly and dangerous sea rolling in from the eastward. The wind velocity is said to have reached sixty miles an hour, and the storm was doubtless one of the most extensive and disastrous that visited the Atlantic seaboard during the winter. The **A.H. HURLBURT** was a three-masted schooner of two hundred and sixty-three tons register, nearly twenty years old, carrying a crew of six men, and was from Belfast, Maine, with a cargo of four hundred tons of ice for New York. The Mate, John O. Roney, one of the survivors, states that at 4 o'clock that morning the schooner was off Woods Hole when they squared away to the west-southwest down Vineyard Sound, and that the Vineyard Sound light vessel was passed at 9 o'clock. From this point the course was laid west-northwest for Brenton's Reef light vessel, it being the captain's purpose to haul up from thence to Newport for shelter from the storm. But owing to the thickness of the weather the lightship was not seen, and the first warning the crew had of their danger was when breakers were reported ahead at half past 11 o'clock, in the vicinity of Black Point, about midway between Narragansett Pier and Point Judith. The startling cry of "Breakers Ahead!" brought every man on deck. The reefed mainsail was quickly jibed over, the helm was put hard down, the sheets luffed to the wind and both anchors let go; the rocky shore being distant under the lee not more than a quarter of a mile ... "

Stranded midway between two stations and with the crew of one already supporting a rescue effort for another vessel the fate of the **HURLBURT** and her crew was sealed from the instant that her bottom struck the rocks. That anyone survived to tell the tale is almost a miracle in itself. The life savers from Narragansett also were saddened by the events of the night as their sole purpose and hours of training was to prevent the loss of life and property such as took place that night. The only silver lining to the activities that transpired that night was that the crew of the other distressed vessel, the **BILL STOWE**, were entirely saved. Both vessels became total losses with their cargos...one of ice, the other of stone. JFJ ■

Capitol Campaign Report

Approximately 18 months ago BLMA launched a capital campaign to raise funds for the restoration of the light station, improvement and expansion of the museum, and for the development of educational programs. Our goal for this initial phase is \$150,000. Through the generosity of our donors and benefactors we have raised \$85,000 thus far. \$76,000 of that amount has already been expended for building and equipment repairs and improvements. Our campaign continues as we seek additional support to accomplish the many planned improvements to the light station. Deep and sincere thanks to the many people who have contributed thus far. The names of benefactors (those contributing \$1000 or more) will be inscribed on plaques that will be displayed in our expanded museum as a reminder of our deep appreciation of their generosity. The following reflects Capitol Campaign donations through January 21, 2011.

\$10,000 - \$19,999

James C. Buttrick
Jamestown general Fund
Dominique and George Perrin

\$5,000 - \$9999

George and Francele Boyer
Anna Templeton-Cotill
Joe Drago
Patricia Kalberer
Mr. And Mrs. Harrison Wright

\$1000 - \$4999

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Jeanne and Guy Archambault
Blair and Elizabeth Boyer
Connel Christopher Cannon
John and Holly Collins
Gayle Hill
Varoujan and Rose Karentz
Mary and William Munger
Newport Restoration Foundation
Richard and Joanne Sullivan
Phillip and Norma Willis

\$500-\$999

Stacey Antine
Timothy Baker

\$100-\$499

Donald and Barbara Haskell
Ms. Marilyn Mattera
Mr. and Mrs. H. Dickson Boenning
Katherine Waters
Charles and Katherine Denault
Cliff and Jackie Deinert
Jack and Clarice Willis
Taylor and Alexis Cote
Brooke and Eugene Lee
Carleen and Jack O'Brien
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Gail P. and Patrick K. Bolger
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William and Virginia Prichett
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Deborah Ruggiero
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John Dowling
Don and Gloria O'Laughlin

\$100 - \$499 cont.

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 Don and Terri Coustan
 Mr. and Mrs. Charles Osenton
 Ms. Priscilla Manning Porter
 Miss Barbara Hamilton Porter
 Charles W. Wharton, III
 Dr. Roland and Nancy Barrett
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**\$1.00 - \$99.00**

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 Don and Claire Wooley
 Nicholas and Mary Biddle Jr.
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 Carolyn Leys
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 Jagdish R. Shah
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 Eliot and Dorothy Denault
 Dr. Ann S. Zartler
 J. Robert and Andrea Dolan
 Whitney Brown
 Mrs. Marilyn G. Dennis
 David S. and Janis M. Martin

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



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

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«City», «State» «Zip»



Mark your calendars and save these dates ...

- Spring Museum Clean-Up *Thursday, May 5, 2011*
- Docent Orientation *Saturday, May 7, 2011*
- Both events are from 10 am to 12 noon

