

# The Lighthouse Log

A publication of the Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association  
 Members of the New England Lighthouse Association  
 Summer 2006

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 Lighthouse Museum  
 Association**  
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**Dear Friends of Beavertail Lighthouse;**

Here we are moving right into spring, (I think!) - well the calendar says so anyway! Hopefully we will be ready for opening day for Memorial Day weekend. You will want to come on down and see the new windows and you'll read more about that from Vice President, Richard Sullivan, later in this newsletter.

It appears that the Coast Guard will not be excessing Beavertail Light Station this year. The list is out and Beavertail is not on it. That gives us some more time to "get all of our ducks in a row".

Although this was not a particularly bad winter, it was a very windy one. You will see more deterioration of the old tower base. When you look to the West, you will see that the wind and sea took their toll on the Whale Rock base. It doesn't look much like a submarine anymore.

We hope to see everyone sometime during the summer, and that all will have a fun and rewarding time at the Light. Best wishes to all of our members!

*George Warner*

**George Warner, President**

## SOME VERY IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

**Saturday, May 6, 2006 – 9:00 a.m. Clean Up Day.**

**Saturday, May 20, 2006 – 11:00 a.m. – Docent Orientation**

**Open Weekends Only – May 27 – June 10, 2006 – 12:00 noon – 3:00 p.m.**

**Open Daily - June 17 – September 11, 2006 – 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

**Open Weekends Only – September 16 – October 9, 2006 – 12:00 n – 3:00 p.m.**

### ALL HANDS DECK

Beavertail Lighthouse Museum, Jamestown, Rhode Island, located on the southern most tip of Conanicut Island, is welcoming new and returning volunteers for the 2006 summer season. Duties include light dusting of exhibits (light house keeping?) in the Museum, welcoming visitors, answering questions about the displays, and working in the Gift Shop.

If you'd like to help with clearing away the winter debris, come on down to the Lighthouse on Saturday, May 6, 2006 at 9:00 a.m. Rakes and hoes welcome! Many hands make light work, so we'll be looking for you.'

Orientation and training for volunteer docents to work in the Museum will take place at the Lighthouse on Saturday, May 27, 2006 at 11:00 p.m., where you will learn all you need to know to be a docent.

You can be part of all this, which is really interesting and lots of fun, by volunteering for a morning shift, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.; or an afternoon shift, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. We'd be delighted to count you among our valued volunteers! Please take a moment to email [campa3@cox.net](mailto:campa3@cox.net) or phone (401) 423-3270 if you'd like to become a docent. Try it – you'll love it! We doubt there is a prettier place on earth to spend a few relaxing hours.

**Brenda Johnston**  
**Linda Jacobson**  
Docent Coordinators

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### GRANT FUNDS PUT TO GOOD USE.

The preservation project supported by the grant from the R.I. Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission is well underway. Abcore Restoration Company from Narragansett, RI won the award and have been working since late 2005, renewing the double hung windows in both keepers' cottages, the tower, and installing the wooden Marvin storm windows. Keith Lescarbeau and his crew set up shop in the basement of the museum, creating an

effective work and storage space. As of April 1, 2006, all the storm windows are in place and the double hung windows have been renewed. The remaining work, repairing the two bulkheads, the wooden storm doors on the keeper's house and tower, will be completed by early May. Abcore Restoration did the restoration of the Plum Beach light, has just completed a project at the Pomham Rocks Light, and served in a consultant capacity at the Conanicut Light. They have done other restoration work in the area, including the Towers in Narragansett, RI. We have been fortunate in having Abcore work with us, given the modest size of our project and the demands being made on their work schedule. We extend our sincere thanks to Mary Meagher, a Jamestown Architect for her volunteer time and assistance in the negotiations for the window, doors and bulkhead upgrades, and to the Town of Jamestown for \$6,500.00 in funding to complete the project.

**Richard Sullivan,**  
Vice President.

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### W. CRAIG ARMINGTON SCHOLARSHIP

Each year, Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association presents \$1,000.00 scholarships to two deserving graduating High School students. This good work began a few years ago in memory of W. Craig Armington, a former officer and member of the Association, who was an enthusiastic founder of the scholarship program. This year's committee is hard at work sorting out the many applications received. Our next Lighthouse Log will reveal the names of those chosen.

**Linda Jacobson,**  
Scholarship Committee

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### POPULAR ATTRACTIONS AT THE LIGHT

One of the big drawing cards of the Museum is the accompanying Lighthouse Gift Shop, which features many items highlighting Beavertail Lighthouse, in particular, as well as memorabilia, books, and lore of

# Lighthouse Keepers

An Old Saw

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**This was a popular poem among Lighthouse Keepers. It was given from memory to the Shore Village Museum by Captain Stetson Turner, who moved to Great Duck Island Light (off Mt. Desert Island) at the age of six months transferred to Bear Island Light at age three until 1928.**

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**Lighthouse keepers have it easy,  
All year round their homes are breezy.  
Noises don't disturb their labors,  
For they haven't any neighbors.**

**They don't need baskets for old paper,  
Orange peels or broken gaskets.  
Just one careless little motion  
And their trash drops in the ocean.**

**They don't need nine holes or twenty,  
They get exercise a-plenty.  
Each trip up the spiral stairway,  
Equals three around the fairway.**

**Window shades are never needed,  
They can dress or strip unheeded.  
Wakeful brat don't have conniptions,  
Neighbors don't have long descriptions.**

**When I am old I won't need pity,  
I shall leave the sullied city.  
Climb a lighthouse, bar the door,  
And trim my wicks for evermore.**

**Purloined from "This # \$ % ^ & \* # @ % ^ & \* was the Coast Guard by  
Esther Somner @ 1986**

# BLMA

## Membership Enrollment Form

I want to be an active participant of the **Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association.** I have indicated my areas of interest below:

Please Check one

New Member [ ]  
Renewal [ ]

- Volunteer Museum Attendant
- Building Maintenance Committee
- Fund Raising Committee
- Nominating Committee
- Archives Committee
- Museum Clean-up Committee
- Group Tours Liaison
- Publicity/Newsletter Committee
- Oral History Project
- Holiday Open House
- Naturalist Program Liaison
- Other?

Membership period ending 12/31/20\_\_\_\_

New Dues Rates:

<input type="checkbox"/> Individual, Life	\$100.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family, Life	200.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	15.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	25.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor	75.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Student	5.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Donation	\$_____

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail To:  
Beavertail Lighthouse Museum  
Association  
P. O. Box 83  
Jamestown RI 02834

Suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_

All members will receive a 10% discount at the museum giftshop.

**WELCOME ABOARD !**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

lighthouses in general. Hopefully you will get a chance to stop in to explore its delights on your next visit to Beavertail. Kids of all ages love the interactive lighthouse board that lights up the location of all of Rhode Island's lighthouses, active, inactive and extinct.

The Museum also contains an historical collection of new items and photos of Beavertail that has been kept up-to-date by several devoted and much appreciated Association members. Also on board, for your enjoyment, are several DVD and VHS presentations that are shown continually.

**Charlie & Karen Osenton**  
Gift Shop Committee

### **UPDATE ON THE PROPOSED ACQUISITION OF BEAVERTAIL LIGHTHOUSE**

A very hardworking committee, chaired by Varoujan Karentz, has for several years, been researching and laying the groundwork for Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association, Inc., to acquire the full property of Beavertail Lighthouse when it becomes exceded by the US Coast Guard. Given the ever-lengthening list of lighthouses all across the nation that have been deemed no longer useful, it is not so much a case of 'if Beavertail Light Station will join the ranks, but rather 'when'. **Our plan is to be ready!**

**SITE PLANNING:** The National Trust for Historic Preservation awarded a competitive matching fund grant to the BLMA to complete a professional appraisal and study for museum expansion and utilization of the Beavertail Light Station. BLMA's draft "Site Use Plan, prepared in anticipation of the site being exceded by the USCG at some future date will be used as baseline. The study will examine the 5 - year program plan (and beyond), evaluate site preservation needs for stabilization and restoration and develop conceptual designs for expanding the museum for greater accessibility and education for the visiting public.

The Newport Collaborative Architects, Inc., has been selected to perform the study under the direction BLMA's Site Acquisition Committee.

The grant is valued at \$4,894.00 from the National Trust's Antoinette F. Dowling Preservation Trust for Rhode Island. At its September, 2005 regular meeting, the Board of Directors approved the required matching amount.

### **DOCUMENTING THE 1749 LIGHTHOUSE FOUNDATION RUIN.**

While the original lighthouse foundation has existed since 1749 (more than 250 years ago), there is no recorded survey on record of the foundation's construction. This past summer (2005) Mr. James Wermuth, a Newport based preservationist, addressed BLMA at its 2005 Annual meeting and emphasized the need to measure and document the 1749 ruin, before some future environmental tragedy destroys the remains.

During the fall of 2005, a BLMA team, under the direction of Mr. Wermuth, began a series of survey measurements and photographic alignments. The measurements will establish a baseline to prepare a documented report for historical preservation purposes and also be used to arrive at recommendations for stabilizing or saving the structure.

During the survey process, the discovery of a second but smaller diameter stone foundation ruin of similar construction nearby the original ruin was noted. BLMA has petitioned the USCG through Jamestown's license and the RI Historical Preservation Commission to allow exploratory excavations around the base of this ruin to determine its age and use. These investigations will be undertaken this summer.

## BEAVERTAIL SOUND SIGNAL STUDY.

Most BLMA members are aware of the present fog signal apparatus at the lighthouse located within a wire mesh enclosure just outside the perimeter road in front of the granite light tower. They also know that the present RI DEM Naturalist Program and the aquarium are located in the old fog signal building next to the Keeper's house. But few know that Beavertail light station at one time was an experimental facility used by the US Lighthouse Service to develop and test fog signals.

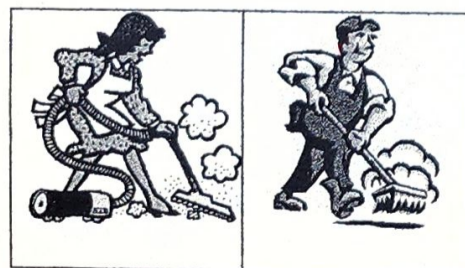
This past fall, BLMA member, Lanette Macaruso, an Instructor/Teacher of College Writing in the English Department of the Community College of RI, conducted a technical writing course for Electric Boat employees with the subject being Beavertail Lighthouse sound signals.

Reports, documents and photographs of fog signals between 1820 and 1900 have been collected including information of the engines, whistles, horns, and sirens that were used.

The reports of this student project are being compiled and will be presented to BLMA. They will undoubtedly fill the void in our understanding of how the light station contributed to sound signal development and what equipment was used at Beavertail.

**Varoujan Karentz**  
Acquisition Committee

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